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ABSTRACT

This hearing, chaired by Representative Patricia Schroeder, was held to examine historical trends in family structure and family values in light of the recent political debate over family values and their effect on poverty. Testimony and prepared statements were given by Representative Schroeder; Representative Gerry Sikorski; Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan; Dr. Allan Carlson of the Rockford Institute, Rockford, Illinois: and Professor Stephanie Coontz of Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington. Participants maintained that historical shifts in family composition challenge conventional wisdom, in that family disruption was common in colonial times and that family size has continually decreased. It was also maintained that government assistance has failed to keep up with changing needs, in that the federal government in the past provided more effective assistance to facilitate home ownership and support health care, education, and improved working conditions. Government programs that once reduced poverty have fallen short in the 1990s, due to the fact that the federal government has dedicated an increasingly smaller percentage of the budget to child and family programs. (MDM)

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INVESTING IN FAMILIES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JULY 23, 1992

Printed for the use of the
Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

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INVESTING IN FAMILIES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1992

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN,
YOUTH, AND FAMILIES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11 a.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Patricia Schroeder (chairwoman of the committee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Schroeder, Sikorski, Evans, Wolf, Weldon, Walsh, and Fawell.

Also present: Senator Moynihan.

Staff present: Karabelle Pizzigati, staff director; Nancy Reder, professional staff; Carol Statuto, minority deputy staff director; Elizabeth Maier, professional staff; Mary Jordan, research assistant; and Joan Godley, committee clerk.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, my understanding is after this last vote, we've got people on their way. So, we hope they make it, if they don't get sidetracked, We don't offer quite the predictability over here that I hope is offered in the other body.

But I want to thank everybody for coming to this hearing that we're very excited about, in which we will look at investing in families from a historical perspective. As you know, there's a tremendous debate raging over government assistance to families and family values and many other such things. I have a long statement that I'm just going to put in the record. I thought one of the very interesting things in there was the recent pastoral letter issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in which they said for every private family value, there is a mirror-image public one. And I think that's a very interesting thing that we need to look at as we try to seek the balance here today.

[Opening statement of Hon. Patricia Schroeder follows:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. PATRICIA SCHROEDER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO AND CHAIRWOMAN, SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Once again, a debate has erupted over government assistance to families and over family values. In spite of the fact that American families seem to be in a "free fall," struggling to maintain family cohesiveness and to stay afloat financially, Washington seems more content to wring hands over the loss of "traditional family values," than to take concrete action to provide real assistance to families. My "Family Investment Act," which I will be introducing shortly, will provide a real measure of support for all American families who are struggling for their very survival.

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Up front let me say that family values are extremely important. But let's deal with them realistically at long last. This is not a debate that can be confined to a discussion about religion or sex. The ultimate family values are those that sustain families and make them productive partners in our society. As Marion Wright Edelman, President of Children's Defense Fund, has noted:

Some talk as if all values exist and are transmitted within the family—that the sum of morality in society is what parents tell children about sexuality, self-restraint, self-discipline, thrift, faith, honesty and work . . . But family values are only part of the story. The other part involves our lives outside the home, in our workplaces and public policies which also must exemplify the values of sharing, honesty, and taking responsibility for each other . . . For each private familial value, there is a mirror image public value.

It is within this context that we ought to be talking about family values, and not within the narrow confines of the alleged corruption of our poorest citizens.

More than a month ago, I invited Vice President Quayle to appear before the Select Committee so that we could have a concrete discussion about family values and determine what this debate is really all about. The Vice President declined to appear, but we decided to go ahead with this hearing to provide a context and take a historical look at families, family values and the role that government has played in supporting those values.

I must admit that the whole debate over family values mystifies me. It seems to me that there is a core of values that no one disputes. Beyond that, I'm less certain that there is a single set of family values that every American family absolutely should strive for. Put ten families together in a room and they will agree on a core set of values, but beyond that their beliefs will reflect their own cultural and religious background as well as their political opinions.

We have always cherished America's diversity. In fact, America's diversity has been one of her strengths since the first settlers arrived. Indeed, our country was founded by settlers seeking freedom of religion. If we challenge values based on cultural and religious preferences, are we not in effect rejecting the diversity of those cultural and religious backgrounds upon which the foundation of America rests?

Second, and even more important, the entire debate seems to serve as a diversion to debating the real issues—what kind of help families need and government can provide—and it gets us no further along in the legislative process.

Finally—and I think our witnesses will address this point in their testimony—our memories are somewhat faulty when it comes to remembering the "good old days." We think of earlier periods in America's history as a time when families labored on their own, without government assistance, and that they managed just fine. But as Stephanie Coontz, one of our witnesses here this morning, points out in her new book, "The Way We Never Were," government has historically played a role in providing assistance to families, and when it hasn't, families have floundered instead of flourishing.

At the same time, we labor under another myth—the notion that the so-called "traditional family" of the 1950s is the only "good" family model and that all families should strive toward that goal of a two-parent family with a stay-at-home mom. Yes, we know that two-parent families are more economically stable than single-parent families. But, we also know that single-parent families would be more economically stable if more noncustodial parents paid child support and if wages were sufficient to raise and keep families out of poverty without the need for government assistance. Unfortunately, these resources are not always forthcoming or sufficient.

We know further that two-parent families where one parent is abusive or chemically dependent are not necessarily better than one-parent families, and that those families need help too.

We can learn a lot from the family model of the earlier part of the 20th century, when it was more common for extended families to live together and there were more adults (and more children) around to take care of small children. And, we can learn from the frontier families of the 19th century who worked more communally with their neighbors. In other words, we are talking about responsible families, communities and society.

No one suggests that we try to revert back to these earlier models. Likewise, we can look at the families of the 1950s, but we cannot go back in time. "Back to the future" appears only in the movies, not in real life.

This morning, we are honored to have with us Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, one of Congress' leading experts on the family. We also have with us two social historians who will shed some light on where we've been, which will hopefully shed some light on where families are headed as we speed toward the 21st century.

I welcome all of you and look forward to a most stimulating morning.

"INVESTING IN FAMILIES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE"

A FACT SHEET

HISTORICAL SHIFTS IN FAMILY COMPOSITION CHALLENGE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

- While in modern times the percentage of children living with one parent has increased, there was family disruption in Colonial times as well.

  Colonial Days. One-third to one-half of all children, before the age of 21, had a parent who died. (Coontz, forthcoming)

  1960. Nearly 88% of children lived in two-parent families in 1960. (U.S. Bureau of the Census [Census Bureau I], 1991)

  1990s. Seventy-two percent of children lived in two-parent families in 1991. (U.S. Bureau of the Census [Census Bureau II], 1992)

- The size of American households has been steadily shrinking, leaving fewer adults and older children to share in the care of younger children.

  Colonial Days. In 1790, 36% of households had seven or more family members. Just 14% of households consisted of four persons. (U.S. Bureau of the Census [Census Bureau III], 1989)

  1950s. Seventeen to 19% of households consisted of four persons; no more than 5.5% of households had seven members. (Census Bureau III)

  1990s. In 1990, 15% of households consisted of four persons. Less than 2% of households had seven members. (U.S. Bureau of the Census [Census Bureau IV], 1992)

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FAILS TO KEEP UP WITH CHANGING FAMILY NEEDS

- Federal housing assistance since the 19th century enabled families to move into the middle-class. However, lower-income and younger families have struggled to become homeowners.

  19th Century. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed settlers to buy 160 acres of land for $10 if the homesteader lived on the land for

five years and made improvements. (Coontz, 1992)

1950s. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) required only a 5-10% down payment to purchase a home and guaranteed mortgages with interest rates as low as 2-3%; the Veterans Administration required just one dollar down from veterans. (Coontz, 1992)

1990s. The Federal government continues to subsidize home ownership through mortgage interest deductions. In FY 1991, the mortgage interest deduction cost the Federal government $40.6 billion. That same year, the Federal government spent just $9.6 billion for low-income housing, public and Indian housing, and housing for the elderly and disabled combined. For households with heads ages 25-29, homeownership fell from 43% in 1980 to 36% in 1990; for household heads ages 30-34, the rate dropped from 61% to 52%. (Budget of the United States Government, FY 1993, 1992; Joint Center for Housing Studies, 1991)

- Public responsibility for maternal and child health was established early in the twentieth century with the emergence of prenatal health care and nutrition as fundamental for healthy development.

1920s. The Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921 was the first Federal public health grant-in-aid program, which established health services for mothers and infants. By 1940, the infant mortality rate in the U.S. had been reduced to 47 infant deaths per 1,000 live births from an estimated infant mortality rate of 150 in 1900. (National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality, 1988)

1960s. The modern food stamp program began as a demonstration project initiated by executive order. By 1975, food stamps were available nationwide. In response to health problems among low-income pregnant women and children, Congress passed the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in 1972 to provide supplemental food to low-income, pregnant, post-partum, and nursing mothers, and infants and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk. Eligibility for the program as well as funding increased throughout the 1970s. (Congressional Research Service, 1992; Committee on Ways and Means [Ways and Means I], 1992)

1990s. In 1990, an estimated 12 million children and youth under 21 had no health care coverage. One in four women in their childbearing years has no health insurance coverage for maternity

care. WIC serves only 58% of eligible women, although it is estimated that WIC services to pregnant women in 1990 will save $1.036 billion over 18 years. One-fourth of pregnant women do not receive prenatal care in the critical first trimester. Improvement in infant mortality has come to a virtual standstill. (Employee Benefit Research Institute, 1992; Congressional Research Service, 1992; U.S. General Accounting Office, 1992; Institute of Medicine, 1988)

- Historically, education improved the social mobility of millions of Americans. Until the 1980s, government played an active role in subsidizing education.

  1850s-1920. Public education was made compulsory at the elementary and secondary levels. (Butts and Cremin, 1953)

  1950s. Federal GI benefits were available to 40% of men ages 20-24 for post-secondary education. (Coontz, 1992)

  1970s-1990. In 1989/90, the average cost of a four-year postsecondary education ranged from $4,979 at a pubic institution to $12,348 at a private one, an increase of 181% in just fifteen years. (U.S. Department of Education, 1991)

- Federal laws and regulations have improved working conditions for our nation's changing work force. When the government fails to provide for new labor structures, American families find it difficult to meet both their work and family obligations.

  1900s. Industrialization created a labor force of overworked children and government responded by passing a series of child labor laws restricting the use of child labor. (Abbott, 1939)

  1940s. Under the Lanham Act, passed in response to World War II, more than 3,000 Federally-sponsored child care centers were established for children whose mothers worked in defense-related industries. Earlier, Congress had responded to the Depression by earmarking $6 million for emergency nursery schools primarily to provide work for the unemployed. (Cahan, 1989)

  1990s. The Federal government fails to enact family and medical leave legislation allowing time off to care for a newborn, adopted, or sick child. Recently enacted Federal child care assistance reaches only the poorest of working families. (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1990; Committee on Ways and

Means [Ways and Means II], 1991)

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS THAT ONCE REDUCED POVERTY FALL SHORT IN THE 1990s

- Targeted Federal programs have helped to reduce poverty; poverty remained high when programs were limited.

  1930s. The Federal response to the Depression included such measures as unemployment insurance (UI), Old-Age and Survivor's Insurance (OASI) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). (Ways and Means I)

  1960s. From 1960 to 1970, the poverty rate for families with children decreased from 19.7% to 11.6%. During the same time, Federal spending for food stamps, Medicaid, and the AFDC program incerased. (U.S. Bureau of the Census [Census Bureau V], 1991; Ways and Means I)

  1990s. Between 1972 and 1991, the value of AFDC benefits decreased by 41%. In spite of proven success of Head Start, only 28% of eligible children are being served. As of 1990, more than $18 billion in child support went uncollected. At the same time, the poverty rate among single-parent families with children under 18 was 44%. Between 1980 and 1990, the rate of growth in the total Federal budget was four times greater than the rate of growth in children's programs. (Ways and Means I; Congressional Research Service, 1991; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement, 1992; Sugarman, 1991)

July 23, 1992

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I have a statement that I will put in the record from Congressman Gerry Sikorski.

[Prepared statement of Hon. Gerry Sikorski follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN GERRY SIKORSKI, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

I thank the Chair for holding this hearing today. With all the recent attention given to "family values" the *historical* perspective this hearing provides may be helpful to those who think the concept of "investing in our families" is a new idea.

I joined with the Chair and other Members 10 years ago in establishing this committee because we felt our kids—our families—were all too often being forgotten in policy debate. Since that time, this committee has worked to bring the issues of child poverty, environmental toxins poisoning our kids, violence, child abuse and abduction, affordable and safe child care, health care, homeless families, education and a host of other up close and personal family issues to the doorsteps of government.

We don't need much "historical" perspective to know that investing in our families is a good idea. In my home state of Minnesota, 10 percent of our families are living in poverty. Nationwide statistics report that the number of poor kids grew by 1.1 million to a total of 11.2 million between 1980 and 1990. These are appalling statistics for a nation of our wealth—in fact, as a report issued by this committee documented, kids in the U.S. are often no better off than kids in Third World nations.

American kids are more likely to die in the first year of life than children in 18 other countries, including Hong Kong, Spain and war torn Northern Ireland.

American kids are less likely to be fully immunized against polio in infancy than children in 16 other nations, including Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

When one in five kids goes to bed hungry at night, when 36 million Americans—28% whom are children—lack health insurance, when kids in Blaine, Minnesota fare no better than kids in Bangladesh—then it's about time we get serious about investing in our families. In the words of Marian Wright Edelman, the founder of the Children's Defense Fund, "We invest in what we value and we value what we invest in." I believe it's time to make an investment in our children's future.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. And we have Congressman Lane Evans joining us. Senator, I wanted to go ahead and turn the floor over to you because I don't think there is anyone in the House, Senate, or in Washington, who has looked as much as you have at families and what government programs do or do not do for and to them. You just have an incredible record.

So, we're very honored you would take time to come over here to this side of the Capitol and help us launch what we think is a very important issue, and give us the terrific historical perspective that you have. So, with that, let me be quiet and yield to you.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, U.S. SENATE, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND FAMILY POLICY, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, ACCOMPANIED BY PAUL OFFNER

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Aren't you kind, Madam Chair, and Mr. Evans. I'd like to introduce my colleague, Paul Offner, who is a Senator from Wisconsin who handles this work over on the Senate side and is here to give me a shot in the rib if I get too long.

I'm accepting your invitation for the opportunity to talk in terms of some historical perspective which you've very properly asked for and which your following panel will take up. And to tell you where I am here. What I have to say is speculative and yet, it's the speculation of what is now 30 years with this subject.

I found myself talking about this a few weeks ago in the Blashfield Lecture, which is given at the American Academy and Institute of

Arts and Letters in Morningside Heights in Manhattan, in which I propounded an equilibrium theory of deviancy. This theory reveals how societies adjust their definition of bad behavior to ensure that there's neither too little nor too much of it. Too little fails in its realistic function; too much frightens the horses.

Societies have a standard amount of bad behavior they can tolerate and therefore, if they have too little such behavior, they up it. And if they have too much, they down it. And that goes back to Durkheim at the turn of the century, and in our age, Kai Erikson at Yale.

But I'll give you an example. I said to these very distinguished writers and artists, this process however, can lead to disequilibrium. Last evening, for example, not 20 blocks from here, three teenagers, the youngest being 15, were executed for some presumed transgression of rules of drug trafficking. Their mouths were taped over and one bullet at the top of their head. It happens all the time in New York these days. It didn't used to happen ever, and we ought not get used to it.

The St. Valentine's Day massacre involved seven people who were killed in Chicago in 1929. It entered American folklore. It has two entries in the World Book Encyclopedia, which we have up front if you wish to check it out. And it probably put an end to prohibition. It shocked the country.

I talked with a very dear friend, the president of the American Political Science Association yesterday, and he said "oh, we have a St. Valentine's Day massacre every weekend in Los Angeles." It means the execution of young people, and we're quite accustomed to it. Now, that is a behavioral change to which you've gotten used to. And my point is that the equilibrium theory of deviancy will disguise from a society real changes that otherwise would horrify them, and ought, perhaps, to horrify you.

And that's what I'm going to say about the change in family structure in the last 30 years in this country. It wholly has changed and very much for the worse. And we have developed a small industry of people who deny the readjustment of what is acceptable behavior. They say "Oh, it was always like this. Oh, it's not changed very much. It changed for the better." You'll be told that single-parent families go way back and there were more of them. Or you'll be told that single-parent families are better than bad marriages.

There's a long, very sustained pattern. And I've wondered why I've had such trouble over the last 30 years when I've talked about this. I began to think—I've really been running into Durkheim's pattern of redefining what is acceptable behavior. We're changing the definition of what's acceptable.

I'll give you an example, if I may. In the current "Public Interest," there's a marvelous essay by Richard T. Gill, who's an economist. He is saying that for the sake of the children, families used to stay together. Since then, two important developments have taken place. The first is an accumulation of data showing that intact, biological parent families offer children very large advantages compared to any other family or non-family structure one can imagine. That data is in.

And then he says, simultaneously, there is an increasing number of papers, one of which was published in "Science" which is the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. (I was once a vice president of the AAAS. You're not supposed to put things in "Science" that won't hold up.) And he just takes it apart completely. The thrust of the Science article was that yes, there has been a lot of changes, but there's been no harm. Not so, says Gill. That's not what the data would argue, says he.

This is from Monday's "New York Times." They're having a series of articles on welfare. This is the first presidential election in our history in which welfare has become a central subject. President Bush raised it in his State of the Union message. Governor Clinton talked about it in his acceptance speech.

This Times article dealt with the subject of child support and it said on the front page, "adding to the ranks of the poor and making the question of child support all the more pressing, is a soaring rate of out-of-wedlock births. Thirty years ago, one in every 40 White children was born to an unmarried mother. Today, it is one in five, according to federal data. Among Blacks, two of three children are born to an unmarried mother. Thirty years ago, the figure was one in five." If I may make that point, the one in five Whites today was what it was for Blacks 30 years ago, and I'll get back to that. Studies show that never-married mothers are far more likely than divorced mothers to become chronically dependent on welfare.

A couple of years ago, Paul Offner and I calculated the proportion of children who live on welfare before age 18. And we went back to the historical data we could get out of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics at the University of Michigan, which we set up under the OEO. It was one of the only databases we have. They took 5,000 families and they've now been following them for 25 years. Of the children born from 1967 to 1969, 16 percent of White and 72 percent of Black children had been on welfare before they reached 18. That actually happened. It isn't a projection.

But the rates are rising and we project, for example, that of Black children born today, 82 percent will be on welfare before age 18, which means to be a pauper. Not a pretty word, but not a pretty condition. And for the overall rate, we project 31 percent.

Where did this data come from? Where did President Johnson's speech at Howard come from at the time? I was in the Department of Labor. It's 1964. We've started OEO. I'm Assistant Secretary, and I've been developing all kinds of wonderful data in which you associate unemployment with other kinds of things that you wouldn't want to have a lot of. This chart associates the unemployment rate (red line) with the separation rate. And they go together: You know, unemployment goes down, down goes separation; unemployment goes up, up goes separation, up, down, up, down. Look, these are the same curves. The correlation is .9. And then suddenly, in the early 1960s, those absolutely correlated curves cross over. When unemployment goes down, up goes separation.

Here is the figure for the unemployment rate. This is just the male unemployment rate, and the number of new AFDC cases. And there it goes, up and down, up and down, up and down. The correlation up to here is .91. I mean, you don't get correlations like

that often. And then, boom, off they go. This has been called Moynihan's scissors.

We don't know what went wrong. We don't know what went wrong, partly because we didn't want to find out. William Julius Wilson has since tried to study this relationship by dealing with male labor force non-participation, and suddenly, that unemployment rate which dropped in fact rises if you include non-participation in it. So, maybe you have something there and maybe you don't. But my view is that something happened in the 1960s. I don't know what. I know it was very large and the country is now in a very bad shape because of it.

In 1965, having looked at these data, I wrote an article in "America," a Jesuit journal. That's 27 years ago. And it says "from the wild Irish slums of the 19th Century eastern seaboard, to the riot-torn suburbs of Los Angeles, there is one unmistakable lesson in American history. A community that allows a large number of young men to grow up in broken families, dominated by women, never acquiring any stable relationship to male authority, never acquiring any rational expectations about the future, that community asks for and gets chaos. Crime, violence, unrest, disorder—most particularly, the furious, unrestrained, lashing out at the whole social structure—that is not only to be expected, it is very near to inevitable. And it is richly deserved."

And that is what we now have. Meg Greenfield in the Washington Post very nicely called it the Great Scott Phenomena. Great Scott, is there disorder in our inner cities? I didn't know that. Do something about it, immediately. We knew about it when it was coming. It's here, and we don't know what to do about it.

Gill has some wonderful thoughts. The first is the death of the idea of progress, just the equivalent of what agnosticism is to the existence of God, which changed so much in the 19th century. The idea of progress is disappearing in the same way. And if there's not going to be any progress, well, it doesn't matter that much what you leave to the future. The future isn't going to be any better.

Another of Gill's ideas is that our life expectancy is so much longer now than it ever was before. That when we think of the future, more and more, what do we think of? Health care. Who for? Me. What kind of a nursing home am I going to be in in 25 years? I want to know that, instead of being underground. And so, health care is the biggest issue around here. And we're talking about ourselves, not our children. And the inter-generational idea of passing the torch—even John F. Kennedy passed the torch—makes no sense if you're going to live forever.

Those are just some thoughts, Madam Chair, to say that in summary, we have had a huge behavioral change. The biggest in our experience. And we are busily redefining it as nothing to worry about. In fact, it is something profoundly to worry about. It will be the basis for social inequality in our country. That person from a stable, biological, two-parent family, he will transmit wealth, status, to the next generation. The others won't in varying degrees. There will be exceptions. There are always exceptions, but in large measure, they won't.

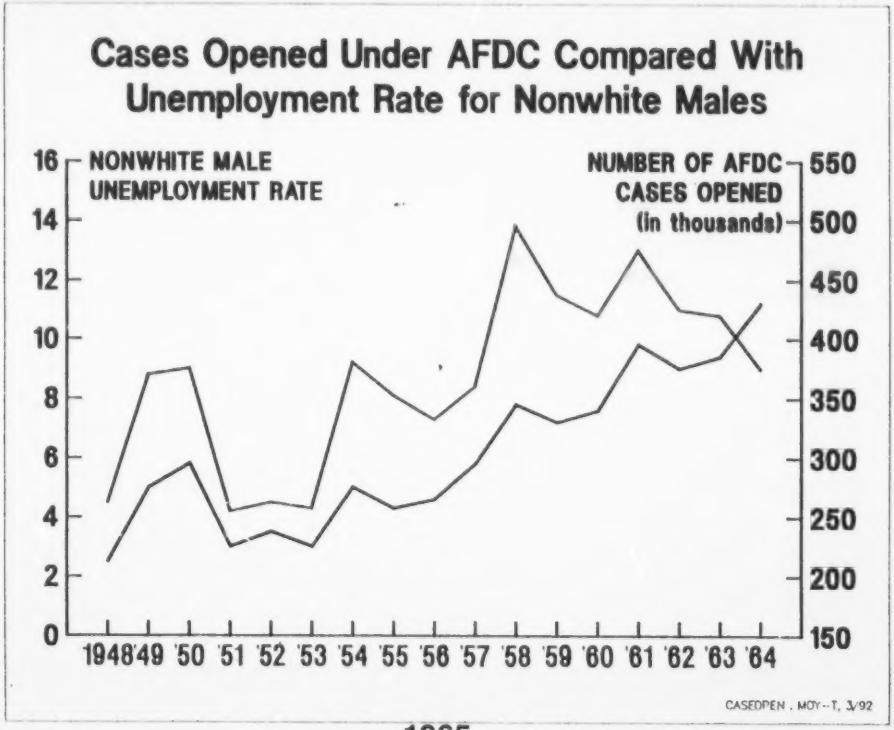
The amount of health problems associated with the young are primarily associated with family structure. I bet you'll find that

out. I'm sure it's true. Crime is a function, more and more, of family structure.

Lastly, I would say to you, we may just pass this session legislation calling for a welfare dependency report so that we will begin to learn and keep track of family structure in the way we learned in the Employment Act of 1946 to start tracking job participation, wages, hours, things like that. And in the end, we learned something. Perhaps we could learn something now.

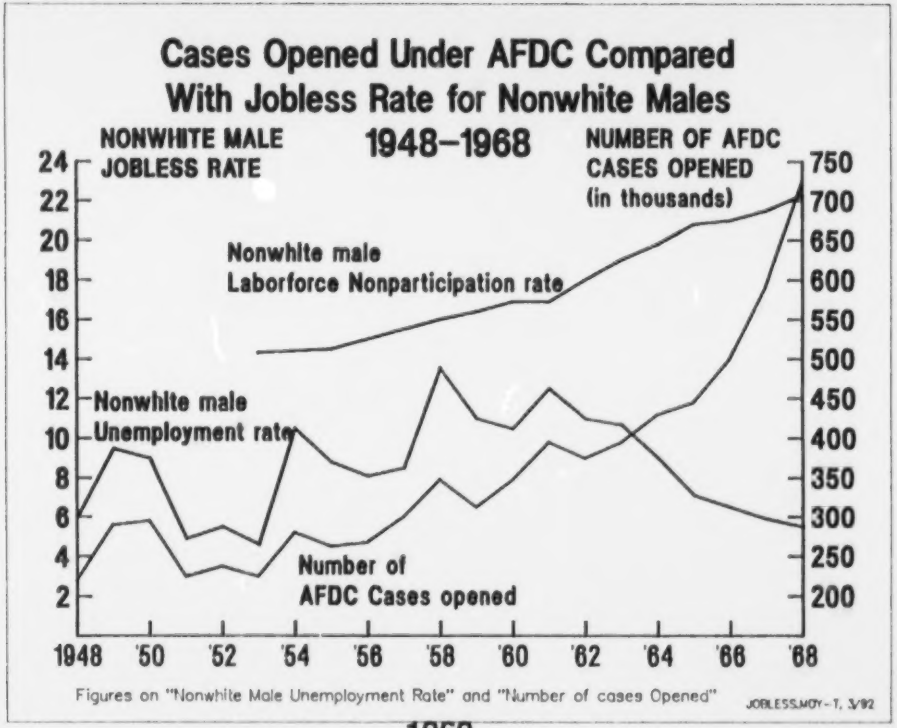
I think you have a vote. I know I've talked longer than I had intended to do, but it was a great honor to be here.

[Information referred to follows:]


Cases Opened Under AFDC Compared With Unemployment Rate for Nonwhite Males
NONWHITE MALE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
NUMBER OF AFDC CASES OPENED (in thousands)
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
550
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
1948 '49 '50 '51 '52 '53 '54 '55 '56 '57 '58 '59 '60 '61 '62 '63 '64
CASEOPEN . MOY--T, 3/92

1965

Chart A



1969

Chart B

13

Percent of Nonwhite Married Women Separated from Their Husbands and Unemployment Rate for Nonwhite Males 20 and Over

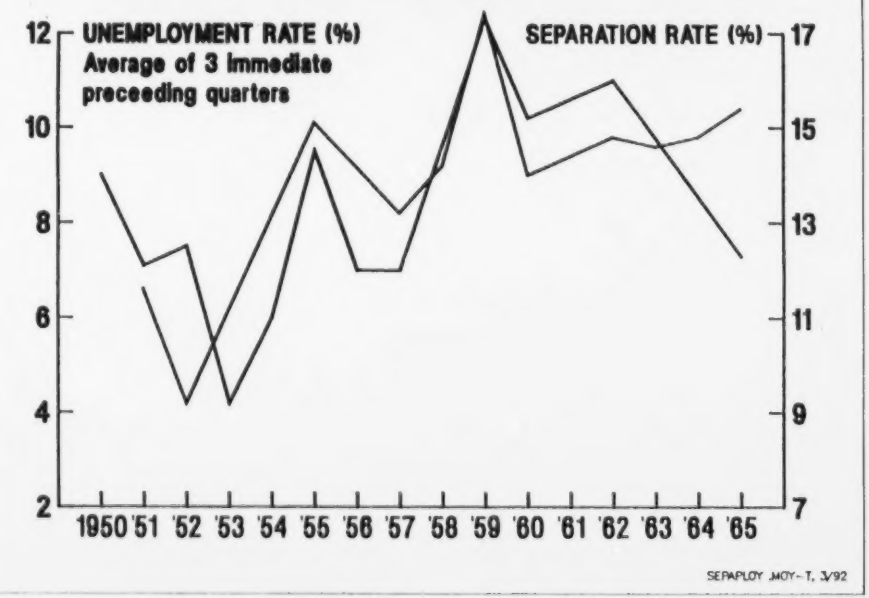
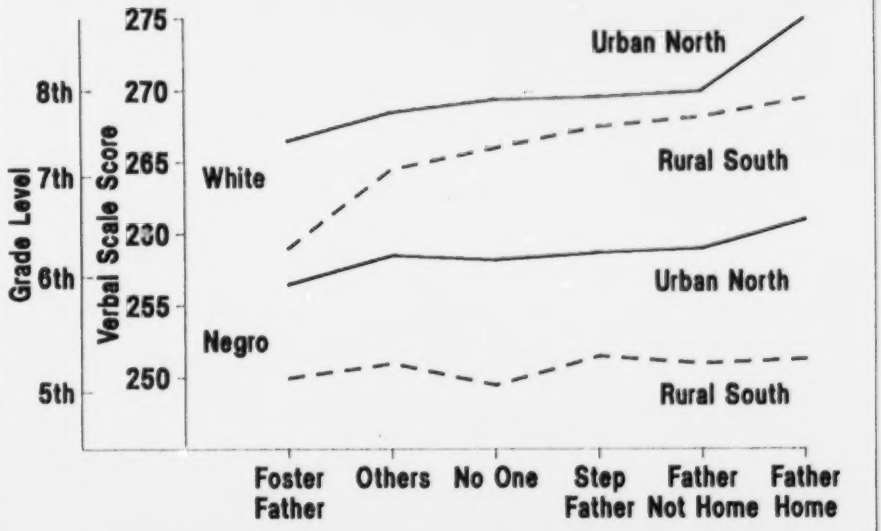


Chart C

Ninth–Grade Verbal Scale Score in Relation to the Structural Integrity of the Home



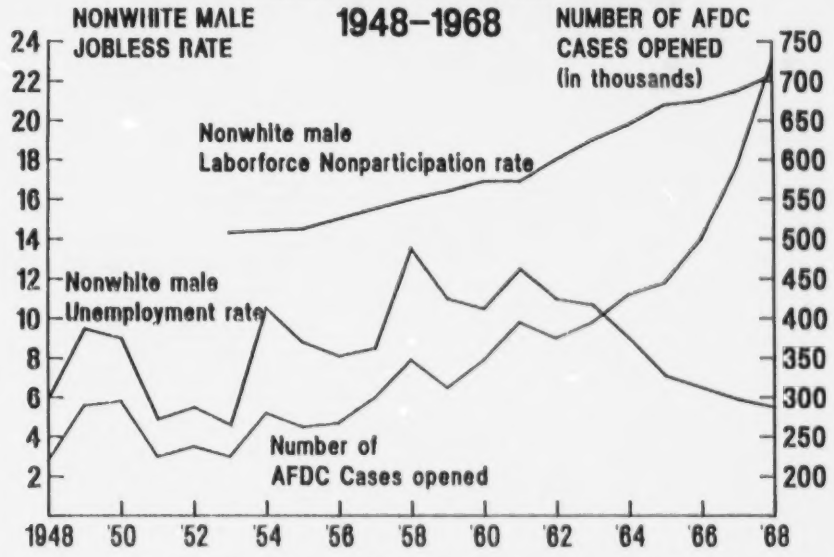
Note: Grade level using metropolitan northeast white as norm.

VERBAL . MOY – t, 4/'92

Chart D

23

Cases Opened Under AFDC Compared With Jobless Rate for Nonwhite Males



Figures on "Nonwhite Male Unemployment Rate" and "Number of cases Opened" JOBLESS.MOY–T, 3/92

Chart E

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. No, we enjoyed it very much and I'm ready to go get a Save the Male tee shirt. I think you talked——

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Save the Male tee shirt.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. But I do think we had better go save our seats and vote. Do you have time to wait for a few minutes, or must you get back?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Sure.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. If you have time, we'd be very honored.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I'd be very happy to.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. You gave more food for thought than we can almost digest, but we'll try and digest it and be right back. We'll take a temporary recess. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. We're back from voting and Senator, I'd like you to comment on some of the families you've spoken of and the relationships they had had.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Now, you're well beyond my depth there, Madam Chairwoman.

If I can say something about those numbers up there. First of all, I don't know how good they are. I told a member of the audience, that is either the best social science ever done in the federal government, or it's a fluke. And I've never been able to get anybody to tell me which and I wouldn't be qualified myself to know. But that's just a matter of personal interest. More important for your point of view, that's the last work done on family in the federal government. That was done in—well, I started in 1961-62.

See, I was able to show that unemployment rate changes made changes in dependent variables. Like dependency, like separation, and things like that. And then suddenly, that relationship blew up. I reported it and President Johnson embraced it. Whereupon, by-and-large, the research just stopped. No one has dared go near the subject since. So we know nothing.

It is simply politically incorrect to learn anything about this subject. I've had a hard time getting any support for this bill to create an annual dependency report for fear—I don't know why. I mean, our Democratic liberals don't want to know about this.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Whoops!

Mr. MOYNIHAN. That we just don't want to know that it's getting worse, or redefine worse into "well, not so bad."

Can I make a point here? From your perspective, if you want sort of a unified theory of American politics—and Mr. Wolf, I think you'd probably agree—you can see our politics having more and more come to be defined around these issues as that Durkheimian process of redefinition of what's acceptable. The conservative groups in the country have insisted that we do not accept the redefinition. The liberal groups have insisted that we do.

I mean, President Bush on Tuesday was up in New Jersey and picked—you know, you can just see the advance men looking for a site, and they picked Three Saints Russian Orthodox Church. An orthodox synagogue would have done just as well. Whereupon, he said that the election choice was between him and the advocates of the liberal agenda. And here's how he described the liberal agenda.

He said they want public schools to hand out birth control pills and devices to teenage kids, and they believe it's no business of the

parents. And that it is strictly a matter between our children and the Government. Well, that's not what liberal meant in 1930. Liberal meant you thought you should have a minimum wage, and a Wagner Act, and maybe public housing. It's entirely different now.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Yes. Well, you know, maybe part of the reason people don't want to know this is because they feel so helpless as to what to do about it. This committee has spent a lot of time focusing on divorce and how we could hold children harmless economically, in divorce. I think we could all stipulate that this country has not done a good job in child support enforcement. I mean, if there's anybody who wants to debate that, that's an easy one.

But when I look at this chart, if we get good child support enforcement, yes, we help, but it's still not going to help that blue line.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. No.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Because those are not people who are going to be able to pay child support.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes, exactly.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. So, have you any suggestions—I don't think we're going to give up our child enforcement thing because that's very important. But what could we do to help families suffering from that blue line?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Well, I knew exactly what to do 30 years ago, but I've forgotten. And as the years go by, I grow less confident. I mean, three years ago, I would not have come here and described a Durkheimian process whereby you redefine deviancy and say, "oh, well, that's not so bad."

The Family Support Act, in which you helped so magnificently is in place. Then we have child support enforcement. We have the beginnings of a disciplined effort to keep people from getting sunk in dependency. But you know, things change and you can't necessarily unchange them.

I mentioned Gill's article earlier on. You were saying, and with the greatest respect that I have for this committee, and its members, and its Chair. You were saying how do you see that divorce does not have the consequence of the children being hurt?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Economically.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes, economically.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. There's no way we can deal with the other, you're right.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes. Well, you know, what if I was just to be a crusty old fellow of another body—we'll all get to be crusty old fellows when you get over there—and say, "you don't want to do that. You want to make divorce hurt the children. Otherwise, people will think, what's wrong with divorce?" Because it does hurt the children. It hurts them tremendously, as we know.

The sociologist David Pophono has used the term, "a divorce climate," in which people are thinking "well, one of the things we could do is divorce." And you know, when you start thinking that, you start watching your options here. There was a sociologist out in Berkeley. I don't remember her name offhand, but about four years ago, didn't she come up with some devastating——

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Absolutely.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. What?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Yes, you're exactly right. Devastating impact on the family, or what happened to the woman after the divorce.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes, what was that name?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Lenore Weitzman.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

250 years ago, David Hume, who is as contemporary a Scotsman as you'll ever know, had this to say on an essay on polygamy and divorces. He looked at various marital regimes, and concluded that liberty of divorce faced unanswerable objections.

First of all, he wrote there were the children to think of. But also, there was the effect of the possibility of separation upon the quality of the marriage itself. He said "how many frivolous quarrels and disgusts are there which people of common prudence endeavor to forget when they lie under the necessity of passing their lives together, which would soon be inflamed into the most deadly hatred where they pursued to the utmost under the prospect of easy separation."

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, I think you have a real point. I think one of the problems we've found as we had the no-fault divorce, when there was no economic pain and one partner could flee the economics of family and start over, it almost became a bigger incentive. By not having child support enforcement, it becomes a bigger incentive because you can say, "Well, I tried that." Cast it off, and leave the child to be the other remaining parent's—Unfortunately, we see this happening with both men and women. It's not just women. It's whoever gets out of the house first, and leaves the other one, and that's very true.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I would like to say to you, and I can give you experience of 30 years in this field, in this city, on the subject. It is a scandal that the research, that enormous research facilities and resources of the Federal Government have not gone into this subject.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Absolutely.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. They have avoided it. They have thought they would get in trouble with Congress if you did.

I remember in 1978, a fellow came over to see me who was a visiting fellow at HEW, as it then was. And he had come up with some new numbers that showed those patterns from the 1960s, really now accelerating, moving fast—that was 15 years ago—moving fast, he thought. I said, "wow, yes, good for you. That's good work. Where are you going to publish it?" He said, "oh, I'm not going to publish it."

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. It's true.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. And so, the only people who got hurt were the children.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. You're absolutely right. And I remember fussing with the Census Bureau because starting in the 1920s, they stopped keeping data on women and whether or not they received child support and so forth. At the time it started to surge, we stopped keeping data that would have been terribly helpful for that research.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. But I have more than extended my time. Let me yield to our ranking member, Congressman Wolf.

And again, I thank you very sincerely.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Senator. I'm sorry that I missed your opening statement. Mrs. Schroeder said it was excellent. And I'm glad you were able to use the socks that we brought from Beijing Prison Number One.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. It's the only exhibit I've ever shown.

Mr. WOLF. Yes, you did a nice job.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Let me ask you one question. Why do you think all of this is taking place? We have the data, and we have the unpublished information that you've talked about. If you had to go back and think about it, with your experience, why do you think the family has broken down?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I think we really ought to try to get away from last quarter's unemployment rate. Someone asked me if I didn't think it was the Vietnam War.

I'll give you an answer, a possibility. Sir, there are no answers that I know of. I speculated earlier that, citing David Gill, that the idea of progress has begun to fade from our culture—agnosticism about progress just as agnosticism about God in the 19th century was replaced by confidence and progress. And now, that's giving up. And if you don't think progress is going to take place, you don't think much of that pro-genitive family pattern.

The extension of life expectancy has meant that more and more, when we think of the future—when someone such as I thinks of the future—I think of health care. Not the health of my children or even grandson, Michael Patrick, but, I mean, what kind of a rest home am I going to be in? I mean, is it going to be up to standards? And you can see our preoccupation with health care, which is health care for the aged.

I'll give you another proposition, which is the declining age of menarche. I've been trying to get somebody interested in that for a long time, and what the hell is the matter with us?

Menarche in Norway in the third decade of the 19th century came at age 17 years, nine months. That was the median. So that, you know, a female had been an economic adult for a third of her life before she became biologically mature. And so, that obviously made for different kinds of relationships.

Menarche in the United States today—well, it's presumptuous of me, but may I ask if any member of the committee could tell me when menarche comes now?

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. It's pretty low, but I don't know.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Well now, check the staff.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Twelve, the staff says 12.

Mr. WOLF. Someone said 11 or 12.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Good. It comes at 11 years, nine months, roughly.

Mr. SIKORSKI. That's what I would have guessed.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes. Well, I don't think the species has any experience with this. Just like the species has no experience of living to 80 or a median life expectancy of 77 or whatever it is.

In the New Guinea highlands, it's still 18 years, six months. It's obviously a dietary thing, right? It can't be the climate. Or maybe there's climatic changes we haven't found.

Look, I'll give you an example. I was teaching at Harvard in the late 1960s. And for 350 years, the offices of the Harvard Corporation really only had one serious responsibility, and that was to keep women out of the dormitories. And then in about two years' time, not just women moved in, but the Radcliffe women moved in and they settled in there. And nobody said a word.

Now, there were no demonstrations. There was nothing but demonstrations if I recall those years, but they were never about this. So, has something biological changed? Has anybody read anything about when the dormitories became—and just like that, bang. Now, is that redefining in the Durkheimian sense, what's an acceptable form of behavior?

There's a social pattern where people redefine deviancy. And if you get too little, if people start behaving too well, you start saying—you make up outrageous behavior like not using, you know, not using the fork in your left hand. Or, if people start behaving too badly, you redefine it down and say "well, everybody shoots somebody once in a while." But in the meantime, that constant level, that comfortable zone of deviancy, can conceal from you a real behavioral change. And I think we are in such a period. There's some of it in other parts of the world as well, but particularly here.

Mr. WOLF. And the last question, are you optimistic or pessimistic?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Pessimistic, but you know, you can ascribe that to age.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Congressman Weldon, do you have any questions?

Mr. WELDON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Senator, we appreciate you being here. Your reputation is acknowledged by leaders of both parties, and your sincerity. We appreciate your interest in coming before our committee today.

Your comment about the only people who get hurt in the process of the splitting up the family are the children is so true. I had a young couple in my office less than a month ago who were telling me their story as foster parents about one of the children they're raising.

The child's mother has nine children and nine abortions. The child's mother is living out in Colorado, and they live in my district in Pennsylvania. The father has split the scene. The mother has no interest in the child except when she can come back East at the taxpayers' expense for visitation of the child, and to be taken care of. The child doesn't want to be seen, or be a part of the natural mother.

We've got to start thinking about the rights of the child as well. We saw the Florida case recently, where the child had to go to court to sue to divorce himself from, I guess, the natural parent. And I believe the court ruled, at least preliminarily, in favor of the child. I think that's something that we have to look at as a Congress, is ways to also provide empowerment of the child and the children of this country, especially in cases where the parents no

longer have an interest or have abused the children, and yet still are able to maintain that support mechanism that we provide through our child welfare programs to allow visitation rights to continue.

The second thing that I think we need is flexibility. We had a hearing that Mrs. Schroeder chaired earlier this year where the states came in and said "we'd all like to have more money." And as a Republican, I have supported efforts to increase funding for Headstart and WIC, and the most important programs. And I was the lead offeror of the bipartisan family leave bill and was happy to bring in 40 Republicans.

But we don't have that money right now. We all know that. And I would hope that perhaps what we could do, is take some of the recommendations of the states and provide more flexibility with the Title IV-E and IV-B funds that are currently already being made available to the states, and allow the states to use that money for some preventive programs, as opposed to the strict requirements and the exceedingly high administrative overhead costs that are there, that aren't going for the treatment of the child itself.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Yes, sir. I very much applaud that.

I would make a point though. Again, you asked me—or I guess you did, sir, Mr. Wolf. About 1972, Nathan Glaser gave the Stopanowskow Lectures at the City College of New York. And he made the point that all efforts to sustain social structures—particularly, family structures, inevitably end up by weakening them and require yet more. And yet, you can't not do it. And that's our fix.

Sir?

Mr. WELDON. Sir, I do have one question before I yield my time. Do you think it's realistic for us to get a bill passed into law and signed into law this year that, in fact, would contain a significant tax increase to provide the additional funds? And I'm saying, not "would you want" but do you think it's realistically possible? And if the answer is that it's not realistically possible, should we not proceed to get something passed and signed into law that is doable, that would give the states more flexibility to deal with the problems of child abuse and the kind of preventive programs and family preservation programs the states would like to do now?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Just one person's judgment from the other body. Anything you can do to give the states more flexibility is a good thing in this Senator's view. We have a lot of energy out there in the states.

We have a new generation of people dealing in these fields, in these matters, who are not primarily concerned with protecting the good name of their clients, as Lee Rainwater has described it. Who know perfectly well, this is a lousy, goddamn life these kids are living and there's more of it all the time, and I've got to do something about it at the end of the day, excepting prevent anybody else from knowing about it.

And that Family Support Act we passed. Governor Clinton was chairman of the Governors' Association at that time. He came to us over there and he asked Governor Castle, a Republican of Delaware, to be the Governors' man on the scene because he was sort of close in and was very much involved in the great bipartisan effort.

And we fashioned legislation based on state experience. And they asked to be given flexibility. We gave it to them. And the more the better, as far as I'm concerned. The idea that Washington can't trust the states, I don't think that's quite as popular as it was, maybe 30 years ago.

Mr. WELDON. Amen.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I'm going to thank you. We're back into a vote again, and I know you have to leave to get over there.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I do.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. So, I really am very sorry. I apologize to Congressman Fawell and to Congressman Sikorski, if that's okay. If you have questions, I'm sure the Senator wouldn't mind if we write them over, or do something.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I wish you would. I'd be honored.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Good. You're just wonderful to kick this off, and we'll come back and start with the next panel. Thank you very much, Senator.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Thank you.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Thank you. Yes, we want to applaud. I think you could do a road show, Senator.

[Recess.]

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I thank everybody for their patience. One of the problems we have is that every 10 minutes, there's a potential of a vote, if you can think of any bigger nightmare. But we'll at least get our exercise today, and we thank the second panel for hanging in there.

Let me quickly introduce the two on our second panel and we'll move right to them. First, we have Stephanie Coontz, who is the author of *The Way We Never Were*, and a member of the faculty at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. We're very, very happy to have you here today, and we'll be anxious to hear what you have to say.

Also, Allan Carlson, who is a Ph.D., and president of the Rockford Institute in Rockford, Illinois. And again, we're happy to have you here too.

So, let me rapidly turn it over to you because we came to listen to you and not to me. We both know you have esteemed backgrounds and I'll put more formal introductions in the record. We will put your entire statements in the record, but Ms. Coontz, let's start with you. Go for it.

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE COONTZ, AUTHOR, THE WAY WE NEVER WERE; MEMBER OF THE FACULTY, EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE, OLYMPIA, WA

Ms. COONTZ. Thank you for inviting me here. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to talk about the historic relation between families and government.

I hope I'm not one of the historians Senator Moynihan was talking about who denies the fact of change. But one of the things that I have certainly found in my research is that despite the extraordinary amount of change that there has been in families, some positive and some very negative, one of the constants is, families have

always required government assistance and no family form, structure or set of values provides a magic bullet for avoiding that.

The first point I want to make today is that the common conception of some natural family existing prior to government and, until recently at least, free of state intervention is a myth. Families have never existed independently of the legislative, judicial, and social-support services set up by governing authorities, whether those governing authorities were the clan elders of native American societies, the city officials of colonial New England, or the judicial and legislative bodies established by the American Constitution. Government has always set the conditions that allow families to function in the prevailing economic and cultural climate. And these conditions have included regulation of the way that employers and civic bodies must relate to families, as well as investment in the infrastructure required to provide families with jobs, mobility, education, and security.

The second point I want to make is that there has never been a natural family economy or perfect family structure that was able to fully provide for all the personal dependencies and changing fortunes of its members. Families have always required outside aid. Elders, for example, had the highest poverty rate in our nation prior to the advent of such government initiatives as Social Security and Medicare. Today, as we know, it is children who have the highest poverty rates. This is not something that government can rely on family structure or values alone to solve, as we can see by the doubling of the poverty rate among intact, married-couple young families since 1973.

Now, I'm not here to advise you on current policies for the family, but I can tell you that you're not setting any dangerous new precedent when you do adopt legislation assisting families, or requiring other institutions, either public or private, to accommodate them in some way.

In colonial days, contrary to myth, government created a legal and political framework that required other individuals, households, and economic institutions to share the functions of education, socialization, work training, welfare, and other material assistance with nuclear families. This changed during the antebellum era when judges and legislatures limited those family-like rights and responsibilities of people outside the nuclear family. The result was that the new isolation of families, combined with changing economic conditions, created a crisis that forced local governments to build poor houses, to provide direct outdoor relief, and to acquiesce in the development of the huge institutions that were founded in this period to warehouse individuals whose families could not shoulder their newly private functions, or handle the changing economy.

Even at the height of laissez-faire ideology, in the later 19th century, government never took a hands-off approach to families, though in this period government spent more of its resources and energy regulating gender roles and sexual morality than it did in assisting needy families. In fact, laissez-faire government sanctioned a policy of breaking up poor families that did not meet reformers' religious or moral criteria for how a proper family should operate. Fortunately, this policy was abandoned in the early 20th

century, when reformers concluded that the moralistic interventions of the previous 40 years had failed and that families required material assistance and government social services in order to survive the rapid changes induced by transition to a mass production economy.

In consequence, they attempted to institute a family wage system, to strengthen the ability of a male breadwinner to support his family without having his wife or children work. But this family wage system, again contrary to myth, was not a natural outgrowth of the market. It was a political response to what had been the natural outgrowths of the market: child labor, intensive poverty, employment insecurity, recurring depressions, and an earning structure in which 45 percent of industrial workers fell below the poverty line, and another 40 percent hovered just barely above it. State policies involved in the family wage system included abolishing child labor, pressuring industrialists to negotiate with unions, Federal arbitration, expansion of compulsory schooling, adoption of Mothers' Pensions, and legislation discriminating against women workers.

Even if we tried to reinstate the male breadwinner system today by reversing the rights that women have won in the public arena, it's important to realize that the family wage system never worked for millions in America. Men continued to earn less than many needed to support a family, a trend that accelerated, of course, during the Great Depression. Unfortunately, we have seen this trend rising again since 1973. Under these conditions, I would suggest that contemporary political initiatives to create a more favorable environment for working mothers are a different, but not a new expression of government's long established practice of regulating the economy and adjusting its political programs to respond to changing family needs.

There's an equally long tradition of not just regulating, but providing material assistance to families. Not only have working people always needed help in periods of economic and ecological change, but the condition of existence for successful middle-class families has historically been generous government funding of a large supportive infrastructure.

Pioneer families, for example, depended on huge federal land grants, government-funded military mobilizations, and state-sponsored economic investment. The Homestead Act of 1872, for example, allowed settlers to buy 160 acres for $10.00, far below the actual cost to the government of acquiring the land. Westward settlement depended on continuous federal funding of exploration, development, transportation, communication systems, and construction of dams or other federally-subsidized irrigation projects. During the 1930s, it was government electrification projects that brought pumps, refrigeration, and household technology to farm families, allowing them, for the first time, to participate in the market economy in a meaningful way. The well-known strengths of western families, I submit, depended in large part, and emerged out of, their access to such non-stigmatized aid.

This is similarly true of the other oft-cited example of familial self reliance, the 1950s suburban family, which, in fact, was extraordinarily dependent on government assistance. Federal GI ben-

efits, available to 40 percent of the male population between the ages of 20 and 24, were one of the main reasons that a whole generation of men could expand their education and improve their job prospects without foregoing marriage and childbearing. Suburban home ownership depended on an unprecedented enlargement of federal regulation and financing. The Federal Housing Authority transformed traditional banking practice by ceasing to require 50 percent down payments on homes, allowing down payments of only five to ten percent, and guaranteeing mortgages of up to 30 years at interest rates just two to three percent on the balance. The VA asked a mere $1.00 down from veterans.

Almost half the housing in suburbia during the 1950s depended on such federal programs. And I think it's worth noting that such government aid to suburban residents during the 1950s and 1960s encouraged family formation, residential stability, upward occupational mobility, and high educational aspirations among youth. There is thus no intrinsic tendency of government help to induce dependence, undermine self esteem, or break down family ties.

I was also asked to address changing family values but I must confess, I had some difficulty in defining precisely what those were. In the Washington Post of July 7th, for example, David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values said family values are "how we live and what we believe regarding sexuality, marriage and parenthood."

An older generation of Americans, however, such as my grandparents, would in many cases have defined family values as raising children who felt an obligation to the less fortunate and made a contribution to the community. Our founding fathers placed the values of civic engagement and public commitment ahead of private interests and private emotions. Prior to the second half of the 19th century, for example, the word "virtue" was not a sexual but a political word. It referred to a person's willingness to fulfill civic obligations, not to a person's personal sexual behavior. When documents from past times mention family values, they often mean the importance of treating others like family, or taking them into your family if they're on hard times.

So, I think family values is a very slippery concept, once we get beyond the kind of basic values of human decency that probably everyone in this room would agree on. It's not at all clear, considered historically, that one set of values about sexuality, marriage, and parenthood is so sound that it should be made a pre-condition for government aid. I recently taught for six months in Hawaii. I found that modern mainland America's assumptions about the necessity to raise a child exclusively by his own parents sounded extremely alienating to traditional Hawaiian culture, which has always stressed child exchange as a way of cementing social ties and building larger kinship networks. Many other cultures and religions have similar beliefs.

Even the Christian tradition, from St. Augustine to the Puritans, has often urged people not to put the ties of marriage, sex, and parenting above the fellowship that is owed to the entire community. Conversely, we all know that strong values in favor of chastity, sanctions against divorce, and tight generational bonds can occur

in families that are extremely disruptive or anti-social. The example of organized crime families springs to mind.

Of course we know that some relationships and values have a healthy dynamic in our society, and that some don't. But that's very different from saying that one particular family form or value system is always likely to create healthy relationships, and therefore deserves unique prerogatives or special government sanctions, while others should be penalized.

Even the issue of family structure is, I think, much more complicated than Senator Moynihan suggests. The 1960s rise in welfare, for example, had much to do with the effect of the civil rights movement in opening up access to welfare for people who previously wouldn't have applied. Changes in family structure in recent years are often result, rather than cause, of economic breakdown. I don't have the figures with me, as I was not prepared to talk on that today, but I'd be delighted to insert them in the record. There are plenty of experts doing research on this topic.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. That would be very helpful if you could do that.

Ms. COONTZ. I would be delighted to do so.

In conclusion, government has always taken responsibility for creating the material and legal conditions that allow families to coordinate their personal reproduction with the prevailing system of socioeconomic production. The historical debate over government policy toward families has never been over whether to intervene, but how: to rescue or to warehouse, to prevent or to punish, to mobilize resources to help families, or to moralize? The historical record suggests that government action is more helpful to families when it provides a general and generous support system of infrastructure, allowing families to work out their own values and interpersonal arrangements, than when it tries to impose a unitary value system and set of gender roles inside the family.

Now, obviously, this has been a very brief exposition of a very complicated 200-year history, so I would be glad to answer questions, if you would like. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Stephanie Coontz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE COONTZ, AUTHOR, "THE WAY WE NEVER WERE;" MEMBER OF THE FACULTY, EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE, OLYMPIA, WA

Madame Chairwoman: I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on historical changes in families and family values, and government responses to those changes.

The first point I want to make is that the common conception of some natural family existing prior to government and, until recently, free of state interference is a myth. There has never been an autonomous family unit that existed independently of the legislative, judicial, and social-support services set up by governing authorities, whether those authorities were the local city-states of ancient Greece, the clan elders of kinship societies, the church courts of medieval Europe, the city officials of colonial New England, or the judicial and legislative bodies established by the American Constitution. Government has always set the conditions that allow families to function in the prevailing economic and cultural environment. These conditions have included regulation of the way that employers and civic bodies must relate to families, as well as investment in the infrastructure required to provide families with jobs, mobility, education, and personal security.

The second point I want to make is that there has never been a natural family economy that has been able to fully provide for all the personal dependencies and changing fortunes of its

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members. That is why, for example, elders had the highest poverty rates in our nation prior to the advent of social security, even though there were far fewer Americans aged 65 or older than today and they usually had larger numbers of children to help them out. Today, as you know, children have the highest poverty rates in the nation. This is not something that government can rely on family forms or values alone to solve, as we can see by the doubling of the poverty rate among young married-couple families with children since 1970.

Historically, most families have relied on outside aid for child care, education, job training, regulation of family violence, and direct material assistance. There have been times when work relations have been so personal, localized, and predictable, and community institutions so strong, that much of this outside assistance came from local networks, but whenever there have been disruptions in work relations or erosion of community institutions and economic infrastructure, government at a higher level has had to step in, and in every period it has had to play a backup role for families. Indeed, notes one welfare historian, the history of assistance in America is marked by "The early and pervasive role of the state. There has never been a golden age of volunteerism."

Government Regulation and Families: A Brief History

It is not my place to tell you what government policies toward families you should pass, but I can assure you that you

are not setting any dangerous new precedent when you do adopt legislation assisting families or requiring other institutions, public or private, to accomodate them in some way. When the economic and cultural environment has changed, governments have often responded with legislative, judicial, and material initiatives to help families adjust themselves to the new environmental demands on their members or requiring other institutions to adjust to the changing needs of the family. When governments have not responded, family crises and personal disorganization have ensued. Two examples of such periods are the tremendous disruptions that accompanied the eclipse of the household economy in early modern Europe by wage work and production for the market, and the similar family dislocations associated with transition to a mass industrial society in late 19th-century America.

In colonial days, government created a legal and political framework that required other individuals, households, and economic institutions to share the functions of education, socialization, work training, and material assistance with nuclear families. Puritan authorities, for example, gave masters of apprentices equal responsibilities and rights with parents in educating and disciplining the young. They also appointed special officials to oversee <u>both</u> parties. In 1745 the Massachusetts Assembly ordered that any child older than six who did not know the alphabet was to be removed to another family.

In colonial times the poor and disabled were generally cared for in other people's families, and city officials gave allowances in money or kind to facilitate such care. The home care system, however, soon buckled under the weight of population growth and increasing economic stratification. By the mid-eighteenth century, government had begun experiments with poorhouses and outdoor relief.

During the antebellum era, a major thrust of judicial activism and legislative intervention into family life was to tighten obligations within the nuclear family and loosen them elsewhere. Judges and legislators limited the "family-like" rights and responsibilities of people outside the nuclear family, abrogating reciprocal duties that had once existed beyond the family. Individuals who voluntarily supplied goods or shelter to non-relatives, for example, could not recover expenses from poor law officials, as in earlier times. Most states eliminated the right of masters to discipline their apprentices or enforce residence in the master's home, as well as the responsibility of masters to educate their apprentices.

After the Civil War, laissez-faire government principles led to more reluctance than in colonial or revolutionary times to give direct material aid to poor families, but even at the height of laissez faire, governmental reluctance to provide social services and material assistance to poor families never translated into a non-interventionist or "hands off" approach. The government devoted increasing resources to building the

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infrastructure of bridges, railroads, exploration, and development of the West on which immigrants, pioneers, and almost all other American families depended for their jobs. The mid-19th century was also the era when huge institutions began to be built to house the casualties of families that could not adjust to the changing economy or growing cultural privatization of family functions. The state gave legal authority, political support, and public funding to these institutions, as well as sanctioning intrusive interventions into family life by the charitable reform societies that emerged in this period. Such reform societies embarked, with police support, on a policy of breaking up families whose parents did not meet reformers' religious or class expectations about proper gender roles and childraising patterns. To create the "true home," one charity leader explained in 1888, it was often necessary to "break-up the unworthy family." At the same time, legal family experts and government representatives opposed financial aid to poor mothers on grounds that while middle-class women ought to stay home, poor women had such bad values that their children would do better in day care.

It is important to note that these arrogant attitudes and heavy-handed interventions came from private, "voluntary" institutions, which had developed large, unresponsive bureaucracies long before the federal government began to expand. Government accorded these institutions public funding and police powers, but did not attempt to regulate or coordinate them, a

situation that led to shocking abuses and inequities. The later expansion of federal authority was partly an attempt to check the enormous discretion and arbitary powers of these private, unaccountable groups, whose white, Protestant leadership too often showed a persistent contempt for people of other cultures and religions. Most historians are therefore wary of proposals to return to such a decentralized, privatized system of assisting families.

The state was also very active in regulating women's relationship to other societal institutions in this period. Between 1872 and 1900, courts and legislatures held that women were not entitled to the rights of "citizens" and even questioned whether they qualified as "persons" when it came to the applicability of constitutional rights. Almost every state passed protective legislation limiting women's hours and access to professions, preventing them from working certain shifts, and regulating their wages. These were upheld by the Supreme Court from 1876 on, and culminated in national legislation in the early 20th century. Laissez-faire hostility to "federal meddling" did not impede passage of a broad national obscenity law in 1873, banning circulation of all birth control information or devices through the national mails. Simultaneously, a eugenics crusade from 1885 to 1920 eventually made America the world leader in state-sponsored sterilization, even though it was a world straggler in state-sponsored relief measures.

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During the early 20th century, under the leadership of the Progressive movement, reformers concluded that the moralistic campaigns of the previous 40 years had not worked, and that many families required material assistance and social services in order to survive the rapid changes induced by the transition to a mass-production economy. In consequence, they embarked on a campaign to replace the family break-up system with a family wage system, while authorizing assistance to families that did not have a male breadwinner. This family wage system, which some commentators counterpose to federal assistance to families, was not a natural outgrowth of the market. It was a political response to the natural outgrowths of the market, which had included child labor, rampant employment insecurity, recurring national depressions, and an earnings structure in which 85 percent of industrial workers earned less than $800 a year, with 45% below the poverty level and another 40% barely above it.

The spread of a family wage system was the outcome of a concerted government initiative, adopted after the failure of 19th-century moral campaigns to transform families without concrete assistance. The state policies involved in establishing the family wage system included the abolition of child labor, government pressure on industrialists to negotiate with unions, federal arbitration, expansion of compulsory schooling, the adoption of Mothers' Pensions -- and legislation discriminating against women workers.

Even if we could go back to the family wage system by reversing the rights women have won in the public arena, it is important to realize that the system did not always operate as proponents desired. Many men continued to earn less than was needed to support a family, a trend which accelerated during the Great Depression and has once again grown steadily since 1973. As women increasingly chose to work, or were forced to do so, the legislation of the 1880s to the 1920s, which had been designed to make it difficult for wives to freely choose their hours and professions, along with the establishment of school and day care hours that were incompatible with regular employment, increasingly became an obstacle to the readjustment of family life to the new economic trends and processes of the 20th century. Contemporary political initiatives to create a more favorable environment for working mothers are a different, but not a new, expression of government's long-established practice of regulating the economy and adjusting its political programs to respond to changing family trends.

Despite the variation in family forms and government responses in American history, we have seen a pattern in which an older range of informal support systems, local controls, and sharing of family functions with non-kin was replaced by a situation where fewer and fewer mediating bodies stood between the nuclear family and the larger economic system and polity. A paradox is associated with this change.

As the private model of the family overcame other historical and cultural traditions in late the 19th century, nuclear families experienced increased segregation from other families, institutions, and local communities, depriving them of older informal support mechanisms. As the market and the law placed full responsibility for self-support on independent, separate families, they undermined intermediary groups and value systems, as well as flexible kinship-community networks, that had traditionally delivered assistance to families. The more the nuclear family was required to fend for itself and encouraged to think of itself as an intimate, private unit, the more that families became dependent on the state during the inevitable periods when they could not be economically, socially, or even emotionally self-supporting.

Direct Government Assistance to Families: Two Case Studies

If families have always been the subject of government legislation and governments have always regulated the way that other social institutions may or may not relate to them, there is an equally long tradition of government material assistance to families. Not only have working people always needed help to guide their families through the vicissitudes of economic and ecological change or personal disasters, but the condition of existence for successful middle-class families has historically been government funding of a large supportive infrastructure. The two best examples of this can be found in what many people

consider the ideal models of self-reliant families: the western pioneer family and the 1950s suburban family. In both cases, the ability of these families to establish and sustain themselves required massive underwriting by government.

Pioneer families, for example, could never have moved west without massive federal land grants, government-funded military mobilizations, and state-sponsored economic investment in the new lands. The lands acquired by government military action or investment were then sold -- at a considerable loss -- to private individuals. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided that a settler could buy 160 acres for $10 far below the actual cost of acquiring the land -- if the homesteader lived on the land for five years and made certain improvements. The federal government also helped finance land grant colleges that made vital contributions to the development of western agricultural families.

Westward settlement depended on continuous federal funding of exploration, development, transportation, and communication systems. In the twentieth century, a new form of public assistance became crucial to Westerners' existence: construction of dams and other federally-subsidized irrigation projects. During the Depression, government electrification projects brought pumps, refrigeration, and household technology to millions of families that had formerly had to hand pump and carry their water and that had lacked the capacity to preserve or export their farm produce. The well-known strengths of western

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families, from pioneer days through recovery from the Depression, developed because they had access to such non-stigmatized aid.

Another oft-cited example of familial self reliance in American history is the improvement in living standards experienced by many Americans during the 1950s, epitomized in the move of so many families into the suburbs. In point of fact, however, the 1950s suburban family was extraordinarily dependent on government assistance. Historian William Chafe estimates that "most" of the upward mobility of the fifties was subsidized in one form or another by government spending. Federal GI benefit payments, available to 40 percent of the male population between the ages of 20 and 24, permitted a whole generation of men to expand their education and improve their job prospects without forgoing marriage and childbearing. The National Defense Education Act retooled science education in America, subsidizing both American industry and the education of individual scientists. Government-funded research developed the aluminum clapboards, prefabricated walls and ceilings, and plywood paneling that comprised the technological basis of the postwar housing revolution. Government spending was also largely responsible for the new highways, sewer systems, utilities services, and traffic control programs that opened up suburbia.

Suburban home ownership depended on an unprecedented enlargement of federal regulation and financing. Before World War II, banks often required a 50 percent down payment on homes and normally issued mortgages for only 5-10 years. In the

postwar period, however, the Federal Housing Authority, supplemented by the GI bill, put the federal government in the business of insuring and regulating private loans for single home construction. FHA policy required down payments of only 5-10 percent of the purchase price; it guaranteed mortgages of up to 30 years at interest rates of just 2-3 percent on the balance. The VA asked a mere dollar down from veterans. Almost half the housing in suburbia depended on such federal programs in the 1950s. At the same time, government tax policies were changed to provide substantial incentives for savings and loan institutions to channel their funds almost exclusively into low interest, long-term mortgages.

Government aid to suburban residents during the 1950s and 1960s encouraged family formation, residential stability, upward occupational mobility, and high educational aspirations among youth. There is thus no intrinsic tendency of government subsidies per se to induce dependence, undermine self esteem, or break down family ties among recipients.

This is not to say that such aid programs were without problems. Their biggest drawback, one that helped create our current urban crisis, is that they ignored or even worsened the lot of our nation's cities. While the general public financed roads that suburban commuters used to get home, the streetcars and trolleys that served urban and poor families received almost no tax revenues, and our previously thriving rail system was allowed to decay.

Federal loan policies were a boon to upwardly mobile white families, yet they also systematized and nationalized the pervasive but informal racism that had previously characterized the housing market. FHA redlining practices, for example, took entire urban areas and declared them ineligible for loans, while "urban renewal" and highway construction reduced the housing stock for urban workers. Meanwhile, the federal government's two new mortgage institutions, the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Government National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae and Ginny Mae) made it possible for urban banks to transfer savings out of the cities and into new construction in the South and West -- frequently, again, into suburban developments.

The point I want to stress here, however, is that whatever the problems in crafting fair and far-sighted programs to assist families, families have never prospered without such aid.

Family Values and Government Assistance to Families

I was also asked to address changing family values and government actions. To be honest, I don't know any historian who can define precisely what family values are. In The Washington Post of July 7, 1992, David Blankenhorn of the Institute for American Values defined family values as "how we live and what we believe regarding sexuality, marriage and parenthood."

An older generation of Americans, however, would in many cases have defined family values as raising children to be

honest, responsible individuals who felt an obligation to the less fortunate and made a contribution to the community. The original republican tradition, for example, placed the values of civic engagement and public commitment ahead of private interests and emotions. Prior to the second half of the 19th century, the word virtue did not apply to sexual behavior but to political behavior: it referred to a person's willingness to fulfill civic obligations. When documents from past times mention family values, they often mean the importance of treating others "like family" or taking them into one's family when they fell on hard times.

It is not at all clear, considered historically, that one set of values about marriage, sexuality, and parenting is so sound that it should be made a precondition for government assistance. Modern American assumptions that a child should be raised exclusively by his "own" family sound alienating to cultures that stress child exchange and fostering as a way of cementing social ties. When a Jesuit missonary told a Naskapi Indian he should restrict his wife's independence in order to ensure his children's legitimacy, the man replied indignantly: "Thou has no sense. You French people love only your own children; but we love all the children of the tribe." Many Christian theorists, from St. Augustine to our Puritan forefathers, believed that intense family loyalties cut across larger social bonds. They urged people not to put the ties of marriage, sex, or blood above the fellowship owed to the entire

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community. Conversely, strong values about chastity, sanctions against divorce, and tight generational bonds can occur in families that are extremely anti-social: The example of organized-crime families springs to mind.

Historical research fails to uncover any uniform, "natural" family values whose relationships are invariably better for people's development than those of "deviant" families. Of course we know that some relationships have a healthy dynamic in our society and some don't, but that is very different from saying that one particular kind of family is always likely to create healthy relationships and therefore deserves unique prerogatives. It is the context in which families exist that is critical, not the specific family type, and history shows that government has a tremendous impact in determining whether the social context will allow a range of family values to flourish or whether the economic and political environment will bring out the worst rather than the best qualities in families. As an adaptable and flexible institution that operates in the real world, the family is constantly changing. The question is not whether governing bodies will change their laws, regulations and support systems as families change -- they always have, and they always will -- but whether they will do so effectively or not. History suggests that government action is more helpful to families when it provides a general infrastructure of support for families, allowing them to work out their own value systems, than when it tries to impose a unitary value system inside the family.

Conclusion

In conclusion, government has always taken responsibility for creating the material and legal conditions that allow families to coordinate their personal reproduction with the prevailing system of socioeconomic production. Government has also always faced tne task of adjusting its family policies to changing economic, political, and cultural circumstances. The more such government responsibility has taken the form of investment in material, medical, and educational infrastructures or support networks, the more families have been able to generate their own economic and emotional mechanisms for taking charge of their daily lives. The fewer such social supports that have been available, the more vulnerable families have been to short-falls or setbacks, the less able have they been to rise above the parental weaknesses and mistakes that occur in every family, whatever its form and values, and the more they have required immediate, direct assistance or after-the-fact intervention within the individual household.

Historically speaking, the families that have required the least individually-targeted government intervention or aid were not those that had some mythical natural family economy but those that were rooted in community institutions and predictable work settings where face to face interactions mediated the effect of impersonal market forces, social pressures prevented businesses from ignoring their obligations to people who had organized their

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family life around working for them or buying their products, and community leaders agreed that helping the entire next generation get started -- not merely their own sons and daughters -- was the most important goal of civic action. Whenever such employment patterns, community support systems, or civic values have broken down or changed, families have required extra help in establishing new conditions of work, housing, health, and reproduction of the next generation. The historical debate over government policy toward families has never been over whether to intervene but how: to rescue or to warehouse, to prevent or to punish.

Madame Chairwoman: I hope that this summary will be of use to the committee. If you require further details or documentation I can provide this on request, or I would be happy to answer questions.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, we thank you very, very much. And as you can see, we have been harassed one more time by one more vote.

So, I guess we had better take a temporary recess before we start with you, Doctor Carlson. I'm sorry that we don't have better control of the schedule on the House floor, but we're getting our exercise, I guess.

Thank you, and we'll have a temporary recess.

[Recess.]

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Well, if we may, I think we'll try and reconvene because I'm afraid this is only going to get crazier and crazier.

Doctor Carlson, thank you. And let me turn the floor over immediately to you, and we appreciate you being here. We'll put your entire statement in the record, and feel free to do what you want.

STATEMENT OF ALLAN CARLSON, PH.D., PRESIDENT, THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE, ROCKFORD, IL

Mr. CARLSON. Okay. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and to be part of this unusual hearing. It's not often historians get to apply their trade in this area.

Before briefly summarizing my prepared statement, I believe it would be fair and useful for me to lay out more candidly than I do in my written remarks, the assumptions that guided my analysis. First, I start from the premise that we can know what a family is and what a family should be, which also tells us what family values are and provides a guide for policy makers on what to do about the family.

My operative definition of a family is a man and a woman, bonded together in a socially approved covenant of marriage to provide mutual care and protection, to create a small economy of shared production and consumption, to bear, rear, and protect children, and to maintain continuity with the generations which came before and those which shall come in the future. Family values are the beliefs, attitudes, customs, and laws which encourage the existence and success of these small social institutions.

Now more than an arbitrary choice of categories lies behind this definition. The anthropologists have, so far, done a better job than historians of systematically compiling data on the family patterns of the thousands of known, distinct human societies that have or do exist. G.P. Murdock in his important 1949 volume, Social Structure, defined marriage as existing "only when the economic and sexual functions are united into one relationship" and then claimed to find this marital institution in every known human society. Also universal, he said, was a division of labor by sex, rooted in the natural and indisputable differences in reproductive functions of men and women. Another of the great anthropologists, Malinowsky, concluded that the marital union was rooted in the deepest needs of human nature and society, and the list of anthropologists testifying to this could go on and on.

In short, we do know that the vast majority of the thousands of human societies are or have been based either on monogamy, that is one man married to one woman, or polygyny, one man with mul-

tiple wives. Examples of group marriage and so on, or polyandry, of women with multiple husbands, are so rare as to be ethnological curiosities.

In our civilization, monogamy has been the social norm for about 3,000 years. The family, so understood, is natural also because it rests on a union of the two forms of kinship, kinship by descent or parenthood, and kinship by alliance or marriage. Now, one can attribute the naturalness of the family either to the plan of the Creator, or to the evolutionary adaptation of the human species to the unique fragility of the human infant. Either explanation will suffice.

Second, I hold that government or the state, is not an independent, impartial agent relative to the family, particularly in the modern, secularized era. It is no coincidence that as families have lost functions and power, governments have gained functions and power. This is why the list of bureaus and activities in the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education strikingly resemble the list of functions commonly found in American families in the mid-19th century.

If one adopts a certain cynical perspective, one can even see how the abstract state has a vested interest in family failure. As families become disorganized, and as individuals experience stress, needs grow. And the state programs and the power and jobs associated with them also grow. Of course, there will always be a relationship between the larger community and families. However, the traditional, often informal controls over families' exercised historically by kin, by neighbors, by local courts, town governments, and clergy, are different in kind, not just in degree, from the explicit powers often claimed by modern governments, let alone those imagined by the would-be architects of brave new worlds.

Third, I have assumed that changes in family structure, or better put, family failure and decline, are the primary cause of many of the social pathologies in the late 20th century, pathologies that concern us all. As Senator Moynihan so ably explained, there is a growing mountain of social science, psychological, medical, and historical research testifying to the direct causal linkage of family failure to lower educational achievement, usage of illegal drugs, criminal behavior, long-term dependency, child abuse, teenage pregnancies, suicide, health disorders among both children and adults, and so on.

And I would be pleased to provide the committee with citations and summaries of hundreds of recent examples to this effect. Indeed, the bipartisan National Commission on Children on which I served, recognized and cited this evidence as justification for its central conclusion in its final report last year: that the intact, two parent family is the best environment in which to raise children.

Finally, these premises, I think, offer a series of questions by which we can judge all public policies relative to the family. Does the policy strengthen or encourage marriage? Does the policy encourage a commitment to rearing children? Does the policy increase family autonomy in the sense of power relative to other institutions and long-term independence? Only when the answer is genuinely yes to all of these questions, does the policy deserve support.

Briefly, highlights from my prepared statement. The problem posed by this committee does go back to the mid-19th century when the introduction of machine technology and the factory system of production began to force the reordering of American social life. Up until the 1830s, householding was the normative American economic pattern. We were, by and large, a nation of farmers with residence and workplace one and the same, be it in the form of a farmer's cabin or a craftsman's shop. Household production, ranging from toolmaking and weaving to the keeping of livestock and the garden patch, bound each family unit together as an economic unit, what one historian calls a community of work.

The breakthrough of industrialization between 1830 and 1870, and its attendant changes, tore this settled, family-oriented world asunder. Day labor for hire steadily displaced family production for self-sufficiency. Dependence on market forces tended to supplant the independence of the household. In historian John Demos' words, "family life was wrenched apart from the world of work—a veritable sea-change in social history." The autonomous, self-sufficient family changed towards a collection of individuals in potential, and often real rivalry.

The shock of this change on American living patterns is difficult to overestimate, and American social philosophers of the 19th century sought to craft responses. Among the earliest, Catherine Beecher argued that family bonds could survive only if the home was completely separated from the world of commerce and paid labor. Men, she reasoned, were regrettably, but irretrievably, drawn into the world of outdoor labor. It fell to women to renounce competitive ways and to construct homes that were islands of anti-modern impulses within the industrial sea.

Writing at the end of the century, Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued for a very different response: the full embrace of industrial production and individualism, and the elimination of homes based on the old ways. Gilman argued that just as industrialization had stripped away most productive functions from the family, so it would soon overwhelm the remaining housekeeping functions of cooking, cleaning, and child care, making the family essentially irrelevant.

As industrialization tore away the productive economic functions of the family, varied levels and branches of government began the process of socializing other family functions as well. As example, the creation of statewide public school systems in the 1840 to 1900 period, sustained by mandatory school attendance laws, saw the educational function and the control of a good deal of children's time pass out of family hands.

Many other state interventions though, were unworthy of the label investment in children. For instance, the Reform School Movement of the 1840s and its successor campaigns, building on the new legal concept of the parenthood of the state, gave governments much greater control over family life. These laws tended to transform children over time, effectively, into wards of the state, and turn child protection into a vehicle for social control, commonly aimed at immigrant populations.

This intentional appropriation of family functions by state or quasi-state officials became a feature of early 20th century progres-

sive politics, featuring themes that would echo through our century. According to historian Arthur Calhoun, in his influential three volume, A Social History of the American Family, published in 1917, "American history consummates the disappearance of the wider familism and the substitution of the parentalism of society."

All along, though, there were other Americans attempting to defend the family unit from the full consequences of industrialization and professionalization, in order to salvage some elements of family autonomy. A major campaign within the labor union movement, as Doctor Coontz has cited, aimed at constructing a family wage economy which would protect the working class and preserve some elements of the home economy. Its strategy involved both raising wages and limiting the number of family members in paid employment.

By the early 20th century, American labor contracts increasingly rested on a family basis, linked through law, regulation, and custom to the steady elimination of the employment of married women and children. In line with this campaign, early state and federal minimum wage plans rested on the assumption of one principle earner per family.

However, another intellectual principle, gender equality, was also in play, and it stood at odds with this effort to limit the effect of market forces on the family. This principle's key victory came in November 1942, when the labor shortages of World War II led the National War Labor Board to issue General Order Number 16. It required war contractors to pay women equal wages with men "for comparable quality and quantity of work on the same or similar operations." By January 1944, over 2,000 American companies reported making such adjustments.

In truth, though, it would be hard to show that the effort by labor and progressive theorists, using contractual and state-mandated discrimination to craft a family wage, actually worked. Indeed, from the 1840 to 1940 period, the rough era of the family wage campaign, American data show the stead deterioration of family life, relative to the definitions I gave earlier. The marriage rate was falling. The divorce rate was rising. The birth rate was declining. The construction of a family wage economy had not succeeded in reversing these trends.

However—and I think this is an important lesson from history—a different and markedly more successful effort was developed in the 1940s. The vehicle for family support or investment at this time was indirect: namely, the special treatment accorded the family within the federal tax structure. Each of the two major federal tax reforms of the 1940s introduced a new family concept to the taxation of personal income. The Reform Act of 1944 created the uniform per capita exemption of $500.00. In 1948, a Republican Congress, over President Harry Truman's veto, forced through a new Tax Reform measure. With the Treasury running a surplus that year of $8.4 billion, the first goal was to cut taxes. Congress did so in a proper, family-supportive way. Forty percent of the tax cut was achieved by raising the personal exemption to $600.00 per person. Another piece of the tax cut came through the introduction of an altogether new treatment for household taxation: income splitting, which was a strongly pro-marriage measure. The 1948

Tax Reform, in addition, confirmed the generous treatment accorded owner-occupied housing which worked in conjunction with VA and FHA regulations after the war, to encourage owner-occupied homes, with a particular bias for what we call traditional families.

So, in 1948, the nation had a powerfully pro-family tax code. And over the following 15 years, the United States enjoyed both solid economic expansion and remarkable social stability and family strength. The marriage rates soared in the mid-1940s, largely related to the war, but the echo of this increase lasted until the late 1950s. The divorce rate actually fell from 1948 to 1958, while the U.S. fertility rate climbed in the celebrated baby boom, which lasted until 1962. For the only time in the history of industrialized America, the negative direction of family trends had been reversed, and the family structure and the household economy strengthened. While many factors were undoubtedly involved, I believe that the pro-family tax reforms of the 1940s played a partial causal role in these changes.

Almost from the beginning, however, critics assailed these reforms. Income splitting drew the loudest complaints. Fortunately, for a time, Congress turned a deaf ear to most of these complaints. The one troubling, although largely invisible, development in the 1950s was the slow erosion in the value of the personal exemption, both in terms of inflation as well as an offset against per capita income. To his credit, once again, Senator Moynihan was one of the few persons to make note of this change at the time.

Direct dismantling of the pro-family income tax began in the 1960s. The 1963 tax cut, for example, did not raise the value of the personal exemption, as I believe it should have. Complaints that singles were treated unfairly reached the ear of Wilbur Mills, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, in the late 1960s. As a result of his work with the Nixon administration, the Tax Reform Act of 1969 abandoned income splitting, reduced the marriage incentive, and also created the so-called marriage penalty.

The 1970s were witness to a mounting attack on the residual household economy: those unpaid actions of men, women, and children for their mutual support, ranging from gardening and home carpentry to cooking and child care in the home. Modern critics said that it was unwise to leave home production untaxed and recommended that targeted tax cuts be given to households with working wives, which had the indirect effect of shifting the tax burden toward one income families.

[Prepared statement of Allan Carlson, Ph.D., follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALLAN CARLSON, PH.D., PRESIDENT, THE ROCKFORD INSTITUTE, ROCKFORD, IL

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, to be part of this unusual hearing. Before briefly summarizing my prepared statement, I believe it would be fair and useful for me to lay out, more candidly than I do my written remarks, the assumptions guiding my analysis.

First, I start from the premise that we can know what a "family" is and should be, which also tells us what family values are, and provide a guide for policy makers. My operative definition of a "family" is:

> "A man and a woman bonded together in a socially-approved covenant of marriage to provide mutual care and protection, to create a small economy of shared production and consumption, to bear, rear, and protect children, and to maintain continuity with the generations which came before and those which shall come in the future."

"Family values" are the beliefs, attitudes, customs, and laws which encourage the existence and success of these small social institutions.

More than an arbitrary choice of categories lies behind this definition. The anthropologists have, so far, done a better job than historians of systematically compiling data on the family patterns of the thousands of distinct human societies that have or do exist. G.P. Murdock--in his impressive 1949 volume SOCIAL STRUCTURE--defined marriage as existing "only when the economic and sexual [functions] are united into one relationship," and then claimed to find this marital institution "in every known human society." Also universal, he said, was "a division of labor by sex," rooted in the natural and indisputable differences in reproductive functions of men and women. Another of the great anthropologists, Malinowski, concluded that the marital union was rooted in "the deepest needs of human nature and society." Still others have shown--I believe conclusively--that "group marriage" is virtually non-existent in the thousands of human societies (Paul Bohannon, SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY), that men have never served in any known human society as the primary, or even equal, caretakers of infants (Wade Mackey, FATHERING BEHAVIORS), and that polyandry--that is, women with multiple husbands--is so rare as to be "an anthropological curiousity," (Murdock) confined to four known societies, and even then often involving female infanticide. In short, we do know that the vast majority of the thousands of human societies are or have been based either on monogamy (one man married to one woman) or polyandry (one man with multiple wives). In our civilization, monogamy has been the social norm for about 3000 years. The family, so understood, is

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also 'natural' because it rests on a union of the two forms of kinship: kinship by descent (or parenthood); and kinship by alliance (or marriage). One can attribute the naturalness of the family either to the plan of the Creator, or to the evolutionary adaptation of the human species to the unique fragility of the human infant. Either explanation will suffice.

Second, I hold that government--or the state--is not an independent, impartial agent relative to the family. Particularly in the modern, secularized era, it is no coincidence that as families have lost functions and power, governments have gained functions and power. This is why the list of bureaus and activities in the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education strikingly resemble the list of functions commonly reserved to American families in the mid 19th century. From a certain cynical perspective, in fact, one can see how the abstract state has a vested interest in family failure: as families become disorganized, and as individuals experience stress, "needs" grow, and state programs--and the power and jobs associated with them--also grow. Of course, there will always be a relationship between the larger community and the family. However, the traditional, often informal controls over families exercised historically by kin, neighbors, local courts, town governments, and clergy are different in kind--not just in degree--from the explicit powers often claimed by modern governments, let alone those imagined by the would-be architects of brave new worlds.

Third, I hold that changes in family structure--or, better put, family failure and decline--are the primary cause of many of the social pathologies in the late 20th century that concern us all. As Senator Moynihan so ably explained, there is a growing mountain of social science, psychological, medical and historical research testifying to the direct, causal linkage of 'family failure' to lower educational achievement, the usage of illegal drugs, criminal behavior, long-term dependency, child abuse, teenage pregnancy suicide, health disorders among both children and adults, and so on. I would be pleased to provide this Committee with citations and summaries of hundreds of recent examples, to this effect. Indeed, the bipartisan National Commission on Children, on which I served, recognized and cited this evidence as justification for its central conclusion that the intact, two-parent family is the best environment in which to rear children.

Finally, these premises do offer a series of questions by which we can judge all public policies, relative to the family: (1) Does the policy strengthen or encourage marriage? (2) Does the policy encourage a commitment to rearing children? (3) Does the policy increase family autonomy, in the sense of power and long-term independence?

Only when the answer is genuinely "yes" to all of these questions, does the policy deserve support.

Turning now to the prepared statement: The problem posed by this committee does go back to the mid-19th Century, when the introduction of machine technology and the factory system of production began to force the reordering of American social life. Until the 1830's, householding was the normative American economic pattern, with residence and workplace one and the same, be it in the form of a farmer's cabin or a craftman's shop. Household production, ranging from toolmaking and weaving to the keeping of livestock and the garden patch, bound each family unit together as an economic unit, what John Demos has called "a community of work."

The breakthrough of industrialization, circa 1830-1870, and its attendant changes, tore this settled, family-oriented world asunder. Day labor for hire steadily displaced family production for self-sufficiency. Dependence on market forces tended to supplant the independence of the household. Again in Demos' words, "family life was wrenched apart from the world of work--a veritable sea-change in social history." The autonomous, self-sufficient family changed toward a collection of individuals in potential, and often real rivalry.

The shock of this change on family living patterns is difficult to overestimate, and American social philosophers of the 19th century sought to craft responses. Among the earliest, Catherine Beecher argued that family bonds could survive only if the home was completely separated from the world of commerce and paid labor. Men, she reasoned, were regrettably but

irretrievably drawn into the world of "outdoor labor." It fell to women to renounce competitive ways and to construct homes that were islands of antimodernity within the industrial sea.

Writing at the end of the end of the century, Charlotte Perkins Gilman argued for a very different response: the full embrace of industrial production and individualism, and the elimination of homes based on the old ways. Gilman argued that just as industrialization had stripped away most productive functions from the family, so would it soon overwhelm the remaining housekeeping functions of cooking, cleaning, and child care.

As industrialization tore away the productive economic functions of the family, varied levels and branches of government began the process of socializing other family functions as well. As example, the creation of state-wide public school systems in the 1840-1900 period, sustained by mandatory school attendance laws, saw the educational function and the control of children's time pass out of family hands.

Many other state interventions, though, were unworthy of the label "investment" in children. For instance, the Reform School Movement of the 1840's and its successor campaigns, building on the new legal concept of parens patriae or "parenthood of the state," gave governments much greater control over family life. These laws tended to transform children effectively into wards of the state, and turned "child protection" into a vehicle for social control, commonly aimed at immigrant populations.

This intentional appropriation of family functions by state officials became a feature of early twentieth century progressive politics, featuring themes that would echo through our century. According to historian Arthur Calhoun, in his influential three-volume A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY (1917): "American history consummates the disappearance of the wider familism and the substitution of the parentalism of society."

All along, though, there were other Americans attempting to defend the family unit from the full consequences of industrialization, in order to salvage some elements of family autonomy. A major campaign within the labor union movement aimed at constructing a "family wage" economy, which would protect the working class and preserve some elements of the home economy. Its strategy involved both raising wages and limiting the number of family members in paid employment.

By the early 20th century, American labor contracts increasingly rested on a family basis, linked through law, regulation, and custom to the steady elimination of the employment of married women and children. In line with this campaign, early state and federal minimum wage plans rested on the assumption of one principle earner per family.

However, another intellectual principle--gender equality--was also in play, and it stood at odds with this effort to limit the effect of market forces on the family. This principle's key victory came in November 1942, when the labor shortages of World War II led the National War Labor Board to issue General Order

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Number 16. It required war contractors to pay women equal wages with men "for comparable quality and quantity of work on the same or similar operations." By January 1944, over 2000 American companies reported making such adjustments.

In truth, though, it would be hard to show that this effort by labor and progressive theorists, using contractual and state-mandated discrimination to craft a "family wage," actually worked. Indeed from 1840 to 1940, the rough period of the "family wage" campaign, American data show the steady deterioration of family life: the marriage rate fell; the divorce rate rose; the birth rate declined. The construction of a "family wage" compensation system had not succeeded in reversing these trends.

However, a different--and markedly more successful--effort was developed in the 1940's. The vehicle for family support or "investment" this time was indirect: namely, the special treatment accorded the family within the Federal tax structure. Each of the two major federal tax reforms of the 1940's introduced a new "family" concept to the taxation of personal income. The Reform Act of 1944 created the uniform per capita exemption of $500. With median family income at the time under $4,000, an exemption of this size was indeed a boon for the family with three or more children.

In 1948, a Republican Congress--over President Harry Truman's veto--forced through a new Tax Reform measure. With the Treasury running a surplus that year of $8.4 billion, the first

goal was to cut taxes. Congress did so in a proper, family-supportive way. Forty percent of the tax cut was achieved by raising the personal exemption to $600 per person. Another piece of the tax cut came through the introduction of an altogether new treatment for household taxation: income splitting, a strongly pro-marriage measure. The 1948 measure, in addition, also confirmed the generous treatment accorded owner-occupied housing.

So, in 1948, the nation had a powerfully pro-family tax code. Over the following fifteen years, the United States enjoyed both solid economic expansion and remarkable social stability and family strength. The marriage rate soared in the mid 1940's, with an echo lasting until the late 1950's. The divorce rate fell throughout the 1948-58 period, while the U.S. fertility rate climbed in the celebrated "Baby Boom," running through 1962. For the only time in the history of industrialized America, the negative direction of family trends had been reversed, and the family structure and the household economy strengthened. While other factors were undoubtedly involved. I believe that the pro-family tax reforms of the 1940's played a partial, causal role in these changes.

Almost from the beginning, though, critics assailed these reforms. "Income splitting" drew the loudest hoots. Some complaints revealed a deep hostility to the pro-family essence of the plan. Fortunately, for a time, Congress turned a deaf ear to most of this. The one troubling, although largely invisible development in the 1950's was the slow erosion in the value of

the personal exemption, both in terms of inflation, as well as an offset against per-capita income. To his credit, Mr. Moynihan was one of the few persons to take note of this change at the time.

Direct dismantling of the pro-family tax code began in the 1960's. The 1963 tax cut, for example, did not raise the value of the personal exemption, as it should have.

Complaints that "singles" were treated unfairly reached the ear of Wilbur Mills, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, in the late 1960's. As a result, The Tax Reform Act of 1969 abandoned "income splitting," reduced the "marriage incentive," and also created the so-called "marriage penalty."

The 1970's were witness to a mounting attack on the residual "household economy": those unpaid actions of men, women, and children for their mutual support, ranging from gardening and home carpentry to cooking and child care in the home. Modern critics said that it was unwise to leave "home production" untaxed, and recommended that targetted tax cuts be given to households with working wives, which had the indirectt effect of shifting the tax burden onto one-income families.

In 1972, accordingly, Congress increased the value and availability of the hitherto tiny tax deduction for child care. In 1976, it substituted the Dependent Care Tax Credit, which granted direct tax relief of up to $800 solely to working parents who put their children in institutional care.

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Meanwhile, inflation accelerated the erosion of the personal exemption. Together with the changes cited above, families with children became the big losers in the income tax sweepstakes, as Eugene Steuerle's now famed calculations have shown.

On top of this, the pressure of the payroll tax was mounting rapidly. As a regressive levy, the payroll tax fell the heaviest on low- and middle-income workers, precisely where most new parents were found.

In part through taxation changes, then, the American system shifted against families raising children. Victor Fuchs recently calculated the "total effective income per person" for households of varying size, circa 1986. His calculations included after tax money income, as well as the imputed value of housework and child care, and adjustments as well for economies of scale. Even with these adjustments, he found that households without children had a significantly higher level of economic well-being, and that the disparity increased as the number of children in the household increased.

There was, in all this gloom, but one faint point of light: the creation of the Earned Income Tax Credit in 1975. The EITC aside, though, the 1963-85 period were dark years for the family, relative to Federal taxation and income redistribution. Conscious policy changes, in league with inflation, led to three consequences.

First, families raising dependent children faced ever heavier Federal taxes, both absolutely, and in comparison to single persons and childless couples.

Second, "income splitting" was abandoned as a guiding concept. As results, the incentive to marriage was sharply reduced, and a potential disincentive to marriage emerged in its place.

Third, indirect taxation of the "household economy" was introduced for the first time.

I would also endorse attention to the charts on welfare dependency which Sen. Moynihan presented, and the sharp break in existing social patterns seen in the early 1960's. I'm less shy that he is attributing part of the problem to shifts in income distribution patterns. Relative to welfare, I believe that the best explanation for what occurred has come from researchers at the University of Washington. Since its origins, they show, the ADC/AFDC system contained potential incentives to bear children outside of marriage. But for about 2 decades, moral restraints--cultural and religious views that illegitimacy was wrong--kept these incentives from having any effect: For a variety of reasons, these restraints began weakening in the 1960's.

There is little doubt, I believe, that these major shifts in the tax treatment of families had something to do with the sour turns in family life that began in the 1960's. Incentives do matter, and they had now turned against the family. The divorce rate rose 140 percent, and the rate of first marriage fell 30

percent in the same period. Meanwhile, the U.S. marital fertility rate was cut in half, in a massive American retreat from children.

This analysis does suggest a direction for future policy. The narrow, coercive schemes of the past--ranging from "the parenthood of the state" concept beloved by the old Progressives to the gender-role engineering used by the labor movement architects of the "family wage"--did not work. Contemporary efforts at what might be called "life-style" engineering--such as the Dependent Care Tax Credit which unjustly discriminates against many families and the narrowly conceived Parental Leave concept--will, I predict, perform no better.

The only "investment" approach actually linked to a reversal of negative family trends has been the creative use of the tax system to reinforce marriage and children. Such measures offer indirect support for the natural core of family life--marriage and parenting--without dictating to men and women in households how they ought to order their lives and raise their children. The tax system is where I would first look, today, for a vehicle for reinvesting in families. A variety of concepts now before Congress--ranging from the proposed doubling of the personal income tax exemption for dependent children to the creation of a universal $1,000 per child tax credit--deserve primary attention, although I would urge significantly larger numbers. I would also urge restoration of pure "income splitting" as an appropriate pro-marriage incentive.

Finally, I would urge support for policy changes at the Federal and state levels allowing families to reclaim, voluntarily, some of those functions that have been lost or stripped away over the past 100 years.

For each family in America still struggles, in 1992, with the pressures introduced by the industrialization process a century-and-a-half-ago. Each family, I believe, also must chart its own course as it seeks to reduce the modern tension between work life and home life. There is no single answer that will work for all, or even most families, and it would be inappropriate and self-defeating for the federal government to force all families into the same mold. Instead the federal government can best invest in families by insuring that its taxation system positively recognizes marriage and children, and by prudent reforms that widen the circle of liberty, giving men and women more choices within families than they have had over the past one hundred years.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. Dr. Carlson, I'm going to have to apologize and intervene because that's the second bell.

Dr. CARLSON. Okay.

Chairwoman SCHROEDER. I don't know what to say. I think we've worn everybody out, running back and forth, and I think what we probably better do is give up. I hate to surrender, but I don't know what else we're going to do because I think it's just going to keep going all day long. I think we've lost the rest of the members.

I really thank both of you for your time and we really will be circulating this among the committee. I think this historical perceptive is terribly important. And if you both don't mind, we're going to ask that people be able to submit written questions to fill out the record, if that's all right. Because I think, otherwise, trying to get people back over here between the lunch hour and the ten minute bells is not going to work.

But the one thing I'd like both of you to work on, if you could, a bit because it troubles me a lot, are the new studies showing that men do not feel family is as important as women. You've seen the new ones where people rank what's most important in their lives. And women tend to have children and family in the very high level, whereas men tend to have a new one.

My question is, is that new, or is that something that has come from this focus on the individual in the "me" decade or what, and how we might cope with that. Because I really am into the save the males mode. I think some of Senator Moynihan's commentary is very important. And we find women ending up with many more roles than they can ever juggle, and part of it is how do we get this labor distributed a little more equally and the responsibility distributed a little more equally?

I thank everyone in the audience for hanging in. I only apologize that this just doesn't seem to be the day that anything is working well. But with that, let me adjourn the hearing and thank very sincerely again, all of you for your time and effort. And I'm sure it will be very well read, as you can tell, because people want to find out what we're doing.

Thank you very much, and with that, I adjourn the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 1:02 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE COONTZ, AUTHOR, THE WAY WE WERE; MEMBER OF THE FACULTY, EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE, OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON, ROCKFORD, IL

The relationship between poverty and single parenthood has been both exaggerated and oversimplified. It is true, of course, that single-parent families are especially likely to be poor. Part of this is because people who are already poor are especially likely to end up in single parent families. Part of it is due to unequal wages paid to women. Yet another part results from the fall in real wages that has increasingly made it harder to support a family on a single income, whether that income be a man's or a woman's.

Approximately 48 percent of all poor families are female-headed, but female-headship does not account for 48 percent of poverty, as superficial interpretations often claim. Conversely, while 36 percent of female-headed families are poor, female-headed families are not synonomous with poor families. Much growth in poor female-headed families, Harvard economist Mary Jo Bane points out, "represents a reshuffling of poor people into different household types rather than a change in poverty caused by household changes."

Economists Christine Ross, Sheldon Danziger, and Eugene Smolensky studied poverty rates from the 1940s to the 1980s, then applied the 1980 poverty rates for each group studied to the 1940 demographic composition of the population. Their figures showed that if no changes had occurred in the age, race, and gender of

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household heads since 1940, the poverty rate in 1980 would have been 23 percent lower than it actually was.

But this leaves 77 percent of poverty that is not associated with familial transformations. It also overstates the effect of change in family arrangements in two ways. First, it includes race and age factors that are not caused by family dissolution. Second, it assumes that people who moved into female-headed families in the 1970s were basically the same as those who were married. In fact, however, marital dissolution and illegitimacy occur disproportionately among sectors of the population who are more vulnerable to poverty anyway; the position of young workers, for example, has deteriorated much more sharply than that of older workers in the past two decades.

A 1991 Census Bureau study found that the average family that falls into poverty after the father leaves was already in economic distress before his departure, often because the father had recently lost his job. The University of Michigan Panel Study of Income Dynamics, which has followed a representative sample of 5,000 families since 1968, found that only one-seventh of childhood transitions into long-term poverty were associated with family dissolution, while more than half were linked to changes in labor market participation or remuneration.

Another important contributor to childhood poverty is America's relatively low level of governmental assistance programs to all families. The United States has the highest total child poverty rate among eight industrialized western

democracies recently studied, as well as the highest poverty rate among children in single-parent families (with the sole exception of Australia). A cross-national comparison of poverty rates within similar household types reveals that "different family structures play at best a small part in the higher absolute poverty of American children." Blaming poverty on family structure allows some people to avoid taking responsibility for constructing more humane and effective social programs to aid families of every form and type.

One objection to such social programs is that government aid encourages divorce and unwed motherhood. But this claim, frequently based on the work of Charles Murray, who wrote Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980, is extremely dubious. Murray's arguments relied on the fact that "latent poverty" (the amount of poverty before any government welfare payments) declined rapidly during the 1950s and early 1960s, during a time when government subsidies or transfer payments to the poor grew only slowly. During the late 1960s and the 1970s, the rate of government social welfare expenditures increased, yet in this period latent poverty ceased to decline and eventually began to grow again. Asserting a causal connection between these trends, Murray argued that poverty decreased in the early period because government welfare payments remained modest, while poverty increased in the later period as a result of the increase in government payments. According to Murray, the Great Society initiatives of Lyndon Johnson seduced the poor into dependence,

eroded their commitment to self-reliance, family values, and the work ethic, and actually increased the poverty the programs were designed to alleviate.

The phenomenal publicity generated by Murray's book had more to do with the way it tapped into powerful cultural myths about self-reliance and dependency than with any connection to empirical evidence. It is true that the expansion of the economy between 1950 and 1965 -- itself partly a result of government subsidies -- led to rising real wages, which of course meant a steady decrease in pre-transfer poverty. But the fact remains that total poverty was much higher in the 1950s than in the Great Society period. In 1964, after fourteen years of unprecedented economic growth, the poverty rate was still 19 percent; in 1969, after five years of relatively modest government welfare programs, it was down to 12 percent, a low that has not been seen again since the social welfare cutbacks began in the late 1970s. In 1965, 20 percent of American children still lived in poverty; within five years, that had fallen to 15 percent. Between 1959 and 1969 the black poverty rate was reduced from 55.1 percent to 32.2 percent.

The American economy weakened at the end of the 1960s, for reasons that had nothing to do with the miniscule amount of GNP being spent on welfare, but this makes the actual effectiveness of government assistance programs even more impressive. Despite the slowdown in economic growth, the most dramatic improvements for the poor came after the institution of new subsidy programs.

in the late 1960s. While infant mortality had been reduced very little prior to 1965, for example, it was cut in half between 1965 and 1980, during the period when Medicaid and other government-subsidized health programs were established. The gap in nutrition between low-income and other Americans had remained high throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. It narrowed significantly only between the mid-1960s and the late 1970s, as a direct result of the expansion of food stamp and school lunch programs. As late as 1963, 20 percent of Americans below the poverty line had never been examined by a physician; by 1970 this was true of only 8 percent of the poor.

Despite stagnant real wages in the 1970s, economists Sheldon Danziger and Peter Gottschalk point out, poverty reductions continued for groups, such as elders, who continued to receive government assistance. It was in groups whose government subsidies declined or stagnated that poverty grew.

There has been an acceleration of urban deterioration, social decay, and family break-up in the past two decades, but the claim that rising welfare subsidies caused this is not upheld by the facts. Although both AFDC rolls and single-mother families have expanded since the mid-1950s, for example, these trends should be understood as separate responses to other socio-economic and cultural changes, for at a closer level of analysis, there is no causal relation between welfare benefits and single-parent families. From 1955 to 1972, even though both AFDC rolls and single-parent families rose in the country as a whole,

economists William Darity and Samuel Myers found that in any specific geographic area or time period, the higher the welfare benefits, the lower were the rates of female headship and welfare participation. Since 1972, the correlations Murray made so much of have ceased to prevail even at the most general level. Between 1972 and 1980 the percentage of children living in female-headed households rose from 14 to almost 20 percent, but the percentage in AFDC homes held constant, at about 12 percent. In the same period, the number of black children in female-headed families rose by nearly 20 percent, but the number in homes receiving AFDC actually fell by 5 percent.

The image of teenage mothers having babies to increase their welfare checks is an emotion-laden but fraudulent cliche. If the availability of welfare benefits causes teen pregnancy, why is it that other industrial countries, with far more generous support policies for women and children, have far lower rates of teen pregnancy?

Welfare benefits do seem to increase the likelihood of an unmarried mother moving away from her parents' household, and hence the visibility of unmarried teen mothers, but they bear little or no relationship to actual birth rates of unmarried women. Harvard economists David Ellwood and Mary Jo Bane compared unmarried women who would be eligible for welfare if they had an illegitimate child with unmarried women who would not be eligible: Even confining their analysis to states that gave the most generous welfare benefits to single mothers, they found

no difference in the rates of illegitimacy between the two groups. Mississippi, with the lowest welfare and food stamp benefits for AFDC mothers in the entire country (only 46 percent of the federal poverty guidelines) has the second highest percentage of out-of-wedlock births in the country; states with higher AFDC benefits than the national average tend to have lower rates of illegitimacy than the national average.

Sociologist Mark Rank finds that "welfare recipients have a relatively low fertility rate" and that the longer a woman remains on welfare, whatever her age, the less likely she is to keep having babies. Mothers on AFDC have only one-fourth the number of births while they are on welfare as do mothers who are not on welfare.

Nor is there clear evidence that welfare benefits encourage marital break-up, although here the findings are more mixed. Some studies have demonstrated a link between higher welfare payments and marital dissolution, but others have found only modest or insignificant correlations. In March 1987 the General Accounting Office released a report summarizing more than 100 studies completed since 1975. The report concluded that "research does not support the view that welfare encourages two-parent family break-up" nor that it significantly reduces the incentive to work. While Robert Moffitt's 1990 review of welfare studies found some effects of welfare programs on marriage rates, it also showed that welfare explains neither the long-term decline in marriage rates nor the most recent increases in female

headship.

Finally, the availability of welfare benefits and the size of grants can not be shown to create a family cycle of dependency. A recent study of child poverty and welfare rates in both 1970 and 1980 found that "High-benefit states tend to have a relatively lower proportion of their children in poverty than low-benefit states." Census data from 1988 show that half of the people on the welfare rolls in any month are off within a year. Two-fifths of those who leave eventually return for another spell, but their total length of time on welfare still averages out to only two years or less. Only a small minority of welfare recipients remain on the rolls for extended periods, and anecdotes about "welfare queens" to the contrary, this is not because welfare payments are generous: the combined value of AFDC payments and food stamps is below the minimum poverty level in all but two states and one other county in America: nationally, the median worth of both benefits added together is only 73 percent of the poverty level. Most recipients live hand to mouth, sometimes going hungry near the end of the month or losing their housing if the welfare check is delayed for any reason. In light of this, if welfare benefits do encourage women to leave their husbands, this is more a comment on how bad their marriages must be than how attractive the alternative of welfare is. And we do not aid children when we force a woman to remain dependent on an abusive or molesting man because we're so afraid of letting her depend on government.

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